

# NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURRENDER

Halsey Davidson





CHS-156) A

Albert H. Ingham,


Merry Xmas.

From.

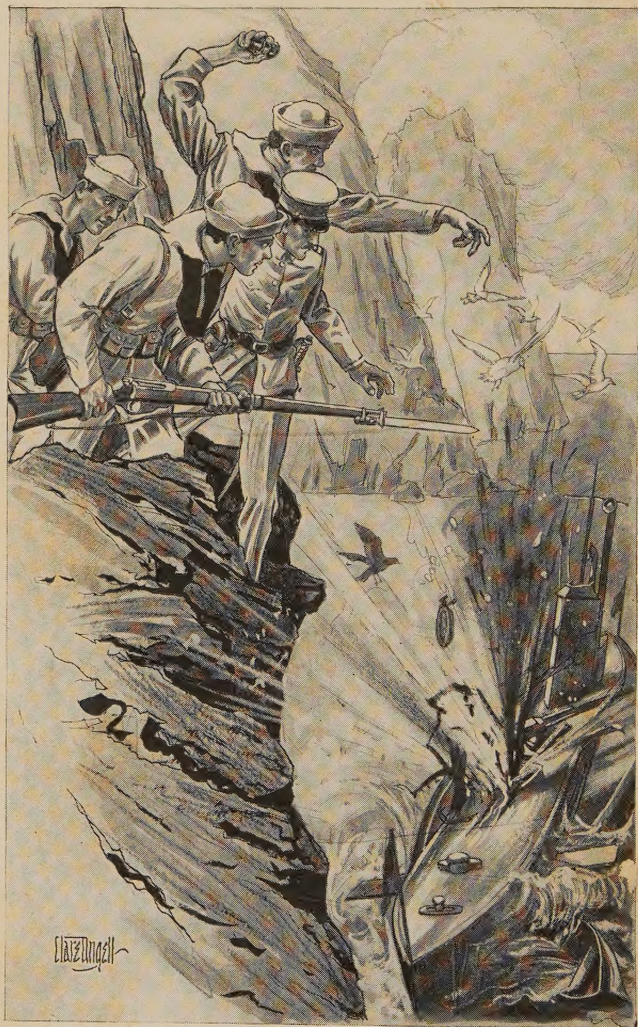
Mrs. Shaw







Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025



A second and greater explosion rocked the whole island.

# NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURRENDER

OR

## ROUNDING UP THE GERMAN FLEET

BY

HALSEY DAVIDSON

AUTHOR OF "NAVY BOYS AFTER THE SUBMARINES," "NAVY  
BOYS CHASING A SEA RAIDER," "NAVY BOYS  
BEHIND THE BIG GUNS," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK  
GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS

## BOOKS FOR BOYS

### NAVY BOYS SERIES

By HALSEY DAVIDSON  
12mo. Cloth. Illustrated

NAVY BOYS AFTER THE SUBMARINES

Or Protecting the Giant Convoy

NAVY BOYS CHASING A SEA RAIDER

Or Landing a Million Dollar Prize

NAVY BOYS BEHIND THE BIG GUNS

Or Sinking the German U-Boats

NAVY BOYS TO THE RESCUE

Or Answering the Wireless Call for Help

NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURRENDER

Or Rounding Up the German Fleet

GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT, 1919, BY  
GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY

---

*Navy Boys at the Big Surrender*

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



# NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURRENDER

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE CIRCUS .....	1
II TORRY TO THE RESCUE.....	15
III A GIRL ON THEIR HANDS.....	23
IV THE RUNAWAYS .....	35
V MORE ABOUT THE WAGGONERS...	42
VI THE CATASTROPHE .....	51
VII JUST A FOOLISH IDEA.....	58
VIII THE PROMISE .....	64
IX OFF AGAIN .....	72
X THE LURE .....	84
XI THE ROCKY ISLE OF SLOE.....	91
XII THE ATTACK .....	101
XIII GIVE AND TAKE .....	110
XIV THE FORTUNES OF WAR.....	119
XV MOPPING UP .....	127
XVI AN AFTERTHOUGHT .....	136
XVII RUMORS.....	144

## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVIII A WETTING AND A LETTER.....	152
XIX THE FLYING HUN.....	163
XX GREAT, IF TRUE.....	170
XXI THE SMELL OF BATTLE.....	178
XXII THE GREAT DAY COMING.....	185
XXIII ON A STRING .....	192
XXIV THE BIG SURRENDER .....	199
XXV PAST HISTORY AND FUTURE PROPHECY .....	208

# NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURRENDER

## CHAPTER I

### THE CIRCUS

Down by the railroad station, at the end of the Shore Road, which was the main business street of the New England coast town of Seacove, a huge billboard displayed the gaudy posters of Garboard & Strake's Colossal Circus and Menagerie.

Since Job described to the best of his knowledge the "behemoth" and the "leviathan," circus managers have outdone themselves in the use of superlative phrases to tempt the appetite for wonders of the more or less gullible public. If half the "acts" pictured on that billboard were one-quarter as awe-inspiring as the lettering and the artist proclaimed, Garboard and Strake's show was, indeed, a marvelous production.

To a group of small boys staring at the highly colored example of the circus poster art, the wonders were real. Most of them swallowed the intimations of circus achievement without a qualm. But there is almost always a Doubting

Thomas in every company, and one came to the fore in this group of Seacove boys.

He was a red-haired, pugnacious little fellow, who pointed with scorn at the "Human Seal" shown in various poses in the representation of a tank of water.

"Hoh!" said the juvenile critic, "you fellows don't believe they've got a man that can live under water, do you? Pooh!"

"He just *can*!" ejaculated a true believer. "He can sleep under water, an' eat under water, 'n' everything."

"Hoh!" scoffed the red-haired boy again, "nobody can't stay under water like that. Minute an' a half is the best I can do; and my big brother stays under two minutes and ten seconds. Guess nobody can't beat Jim."

"You are wrong there, Perry," said a boy who had not spoken before. "You forget Whistler Morgan."

"Hoh! what about him, Phelan Donahue? You think," said the red-haired boy, "there ain't nobody like your brother Mike and Whistler and those other Navy Boys. What about Whistler Morgan?"

The Donahue boy chuckled, his freckled face widening with a grin.

"Don't you know that Whistler stayed under water for a couple of days?"



"Aw, go on!" was the chorus of disbelief, the other boys joining the red-haired Perry in a noisy cry.

"That's right," insisted Phelan Donahue.

"He must have drowned and they brought him to life again," said Perry, with scorn.

"When did he do all that?" demanded another boy of the Irish lad.

"When he fell overboard from his ship and was picked up by a German submarine. Ha, ha! I got you, didn't I?"

"Hoh!" grumbled Perry, "I don't believe all those gobs say."

"What's a 'gob?' " demanded a less sophisticated boy. "A 'gobbler?' Does he gobble his food?"

"They're sailors in the navy. My brother Mike and Whistler and Al Torrance and Ikey Rosenmeyer have been everywhere," said Phelan. "And they pay 'em money for it!"

"Well," said the Doubting Thomas, sticking to his text, "I don't believe they, nor nobody else, can stay under water like the picture says this Human Seal does."

"Hey! You can ask Whistler," shouted another lad. "Here he comes."

"And Frenchy Donahue with him," said another.

Two young fellows in the go-ashore clothes of

the United States Navy just then appeared on the street. They came smartly along to where the group of smaller lads were standing in front of the billboard.

The older of the two Navy Boys was whistling cheerfully. Off his ship, unless he was asleep, talking, or eating, one seldom saw Philip Morgan without his lips puckered into a whistle. This fact had long since given him a nickname that was very likely to stick.

Mike Donahue was a smaller youth—smiling, sharp-eyed, full of fun, but with the poetic traits of his ancestry well developed. He often said he owned a “foine French name,” and therefore was usually called “Frenchy” instead of Michael, with which he had been christened.

“Hey, Mike,” said Phelan, “didn’t Whistler stay under water longer than this seal-man can, when he was captured by the submarine?”

“Surest thing you know,” agreed his brother.

“Say!” blurted out Perry, the doubter, “do you believe this Human Seal can stay under water and do all them things?”

“I don’t know,” said Michael Donahue. “What do you care? Is he a friend of yours?”

“I bet that whole circus is a fake,” declared Perry, with strong conviction.

“Oh, I wouldn’t say that,” said Phil Morgan, smiling down at the smaller boy. “There’s always

a lot of fun in a circus. If one thing isn't just as the billboards say, another act is better. Sure, a circus is lots of fun!"

"Say, Whistler," exclaimed Mike Donahue, "let's get Al and Ikey and George, and all of us go down to Rivermouth and take in this show. Seacove is as dead as a mackerel at this time of year, anyway."

"We'll have to go to-night, then," said his friend, as they walked on, leaving the smaller boys still grouped in front of the circus posters.

"And Torry borrowed Burgess's *Spray* for this afternoon. The old man let him have it without a single kick."

"All right," Phil Morgan observed. "We can sail over to Rivermouth in time for the show, and come back in the *Spray*, too. She's got an auxiliary engine. We needn't be afraid of getting becalmed."

"By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland! it's right you are, Whistler. Come on and find Al. I saw Ikey just now at his father's store, and he said he was going down to the dock with a basket of lunch. Oh! nothing's too good for Ikey in the delicatessen store now. His papa would let him strip the shelves of everything fit to eat if he wanted to. The only thing is, Mr. Rosenmeyer is disappointed that Ikey don't capture a German and bring him home to

work in the delicatessen store while Ikey is off fighting for his country. And *wouldn't* that German have to work!"

"Ikey's father believes in treatin' 'em rough, does he?" chuckled Morgan.

"Yep. Hey! there's Ikey now with the basket."

The two quickened their steps as they neared the waterfront. Ahead of them was a slim lad, likewise in navy dress, almost staggering under the weight of a big market basket. Morgan whistled shrilly. Donahue shouted:

"Hey, Ikey! what steamship are you going to provision?"

The boy with the basket turned, displaying a shrewd face, a large nose commanding it, fine dark eyes, and a crown of black curls above his very good forehead. He set down the heavy basket instantly.

"Oi, oi," he shouted in reply to Donahue. "Come and give a hand. I could wish it all into you fellers' stomachs, so that I wouldn't have to carry it."

"I thought George was going to give you a hand," said Morgan, and then began to whistle again as he picked up the basket.

"Aw, Belding is with Torry," said Donahue. "Come on, Ikey. We're going to the circus."

"What circus? I thought you were going yachting?"



"Both," Morgan broke off whistling long enough to say.

"Oi, oi," crooned Ikey. "A circus is it? Out at sea?"

"Down at Rivermouth," explained the Irish lad. "She's there for this one day only. And we don't often have a chance to see a circus at sea," and he grinned.

"Only when the old *Colodia* pitches us out of our hammocks in a rolling sea," returned Ikey.

"Don't you want to go?"

"Sure! And I don't care if we don't get home till morning. This may be the last bit of fun we have before our leave is up. The *Colodia* left Norfolk for the north yesterday. I read it in the paper."

"Back to the briny, boys!" groaned Donahue. "This being a garby for Uncle Sam is all it is cracked up to be—and more! I'm scarcely used, yet, to walking on dry land, and it's back to the pitching deck of an old iron pot!"

Ikey thumped him soundly between the shoulders. "Treason!" he shouted. "You know you wouldn't be anything else but a sailor lad. Wait till we get our second hitch and begin to wear stripes."

"Sure!" ejaculated Donahue. "I know you've promised your papa to end up as an admiral. But that is a long, long road."

"It can be done," declared Ikey, with conviction.

"Let him dream. Don't wake him up," said Morgan.

They came to the wharf against which the schooner *Spray* was moored. Two young lads, dressed likewise in naval uniforms, were working about her deck. She was rather a frowsy looking old craft, but her lines were well drawn, and every boy in Seacove knew her to be about the fastest craft in the harbor.

"Hi, Torry! We've got the lunch," sang out Donahue.

"And I'm hungry enough to stop right now and eat it all," said the youth addressed, who was almost as big as Phil Morgan.

The other youth was taller than any of the four Seacove boys, and there was an air about him that made him seem different from them. Not that George Belding made himself appear of a class different from his friends; but he was city bred and he had learned seamanship first on his father's yacht, the *Sirius*, which was now doing patrol duty in the Bay of Biscay.

George, however, had entered the navy as an apprentice, as had his four friends, and like them expected to stick to the service, war or no war. He hailed Morgan now with:

"Say, Phil, your mother got a letter from

South America after you left the house this morning. It's from the doctor, and the girls are well."

"I bet Alice has found one of those Brazilian dons more to her liking than a United States gob," thrust in Donahue, grinning wickedly.

"Don't mind him, George," said Morgan. "How's your sister, Lilian?"

"Your father says they are all fine. Now come on and help us get this old tub off. The afternoon is going fast," Belding said.

Al Torrance and George Belding fell in with the plan of attending the circus at Rivermouth at once. Ikey ran for another can of gasoline to make sure they would have enough if the wind should be against them when they started back from Rivermouth.

They got the schooner out of the dock and put up only a hand's breadth of mainsail and the jib until the *Spray* was through the litter of small craft moored in the harbor. The schooner was not a larger vessel, but had the boys desired to put on all the canvas, they would have had their hands more than full tending sheet.

However, they worked hard for the next half hour, by which time the *Spray* began to lay over a trifle and throw the spindrift high from her bows. They ran out of Seacove Harbor at a spanking pace, slid along the outer edge of the

Sea Gull Reef and made their first about and tack for the misty headlands of Rivermouth.

Twice a submarine patrol boat passed, and one of them seemed inclined to take a closer look until she saw the name, knew where the yacht was from, and likewise observed Donahue wig-wagging on the forward deck in true navy fashion.

"Maybe they think we are on government service, too," said the Irish lad grinning. "But, believe me! I've had all I want of living aboard those sub. chasers. You might as well be in a submarine—eh, Whistler?"

"It's the truth," agreed their leader, breaking off his whistle.

"You'll bring us some bad luck with that pipe of yours," growled Al Torrance. "Old Seven Knot, our boatswain, would either pitch you overboard right now or stop you in some other way. Cut it out, Phil."

In spite of Al's prophecy they got to Rivermouth in safety, and in ample season for supper and the circus afterward. They left the *Spray* in the care of a boat-keeper and went up to Yancey's, a restaurant they favored, for supper. Abe, the waiter, was on hand to give them a good table and serve the five sailors the best the house afforded.

The town was full of strangers, and by the time



the friends came out of the eating place the crowds were moving toward the outskirts of the town, where Garboard & Strake's Colossal Circus and Menagerie had made its pitch.

It was getting toward the end of the circus season, and everything was rather tawdry and worn looking. But under the flare of the gasoline torches the tinsel and paint sparkled its best. The boys looked through the side show and saw the Human Seal do all that had been promised on the billboard—with the aid of a pocket of compressed air, a rubber tube, and a noseclip.

The Navy Boys got good seats at the ringside in ample season for the grand march. The usual influx of jesters and clowns followed. There were riders, races, and other equestrian acts in the outer ring, while in the two smaller ones and from the rigging overhead under the big top the acrobats and trapeze workers performed.

Then all three rings were cleared for the setting of "a tremendous, trapeze trilogy," according to the ringmaster, who was a hoarse-voiced man with a tall hat, a long whip, and varnished riding boots, and, as Mike Donahue pointed out, one of the ugliest faces it had ever been the boys' fortune to see.

"He'd bite through a horseshoe nail with one crunch, I do belave," whispered the Irish lad. "Sure, see how he bosses around them girls

dressed like fairies. Are they dogs, I dunno, that he should speak that way to them?"

"Cracky!" exclaimed Al Torrance suddenly. "See that one with the yellow hair and pink cheeks—the little one. Isn't she as pretty as a picture?"

"Oi, oi!" exclaimed Ikey, staring at the older lad. "Is it getting a crush on a circus performer you are, Torry? My, oh, my! who ever heard the like?"

"Shut up!" commanded Torrance, in some heat.

"She isn't anywhere near as pretty as Alice Morgan," declared George Belding quite seriously.

"I don't know about that," Alice's brother observed. "But I know she's not as pretty as Lillian, your sister, George."

"See that!" gasped Torrance.

The girls in tinsel and tights and with gauze wings attached to their shoulder-blades had a harness around their bodies so that they could be hoisted by the clowns and canvasmen from the tanbark to the upper-rigging. The girl Torrance was looking at so earnestly was shot into the air, whirling around and around most dizzily as she went.

"I don't believe that is safe," grumbled Torrance, much to the amusement of the other boys.

The rope by which the girl in the fairy's costume was being hauled up from the ring was near the main pole of the tent. On that pole was a tank which supplied the lamps with fuel. The rope swayed near that tank as the five navy boys watched intently the hoisting of the young performer.

She rose above it, and the tip of her toe barely touched the corner of the tank. The latter began to sway. It could not have been well fastened in its place.

The girl was hoisted to the wires above. She reached behind her, bending forward, and clasped certain appliances over the wire on which she was to "fly" from one end of the tent to the other. Her mates in the act were perhaps half way to the wires.

Suddenly a great shout arose from performers and audience alike, and a shrill cry from Al Torrance, as he jumped to his feet, topped the vocal chorus of fear and excitement:

"See that tank! She's a goner!" he yelled.

The tank broke from its fastenings and fell. As it landed in the ring it exploded and a mass of flames burst forth. In an instant the fire was mounting to the canvas roof as well as eating its way through the straw and sawdust toward the audience.

"Look at that girl!" shouted Torrance to his

mates. "She'll be burned alive up there! They can't get her down."

He leaped the barrier into the ring. The girls in the act with the one on whom the boys' gaze had been fixed were dropped quickly to the ground. A man in tights came running and shouting from the dressing tent, his gaze fixed on the imperiled girl hanging from the wire. She had cast loose the hook of the rope that had hoisted her to this spot, and the rope was already on fire.

"Say, boys!" yelled Torrance, looking back at his friends, "we've got to get her down."

"Wait!" cried Morgan. "Don't be so rash. That gasoline is spattering all around. You'll be hurt!"

But his chum paid no attention to this warning. He was running toward the center of the ring.



## CHAPTER II

### TORRY TO THE RESCUE

THE fire spread with breath-taking rapidity. Morgan and his companions leaped the low barrier before the circus seats and ran after the excited Torrance.

Two thousand people were in the big tent. A deep murmur swelled into a roar of voices, and answering these human cries came the blasts of excitement and rage from the animals in the menagerie tent. Pandemonium had broken loose in a very few seconds.

Men, women, and children were rushing for the exits of the big tent. Many, seeing the impossibility of reaching these before being cut off by the fire, which spread like a prairie conflagration, madly tore at the stout canvas sides of the tent. They dropped through between the seats and crept under them to the canvas walls.

The five sailors managed to get together. Torrance for once was their leader. He would hear to no caution.

"That girl's got to be saved. I'm going up there," he shouted. "You fellows hoist me."

The boys had reached one of the hoisting ropes to which a "flying fairy" had been attached. Torrance seized the rope and the other boys laid hold of the hoisting end.

"Up!" shouted Torrance. "Bear a hand, you fellows. Quick, now!"

Above their heads the girl attached to the wire was struggling almost directly over the geyser of flame that rose from the exploded gasoline tank.

Torrance and his friends had seen some exciting adventures since their first assignment to duty in the navy; but never before had such an emergency as this confronted them. But they were courageous and quite calm in the presence of danger. If they had gained nothing else in their twenty months of training, they had gained self-possession.

The four Seacove boys—Morgan, Torrance, Donahue, and Rosenmeyer—had begun their first hitch, as a navy enlistment is called, early in 1917, before the United States entered the Great War. Their initial training at Saugarack, the big naval training camp, and their first two cruises in the then brand new destroyer *Colodia* are related in the first book of the series, entitled, "Navy Boys After the Submarines; Or, Protecting the Giant Convoy."

The second book of the series, "Navy Boys Chasing a Sea Raider; Or, Landing a Million Dollar Prize," tells of the boys' further adventures with the *Colodia*, and as members of a prize crew on the captured German raider *Graf von Posen*.

The third volume relates the boys' adventures in a short cruise aboard the super-dreadnaught *Kennebunk*, during which the huge ship took part in a brief battle with the British fleet against some of the units of the German navy. The book is entitled: "Navy Boys Behind the Big Guns; Or, Sinking the German U-Boats."

The fourth volume, that immediately preceding the present story, is called "Navy Boys to the Rescue; Or, Answering the Wireless Call for Help." In it is related some of the work of Admiral Sims' flotilla on foreign service—the adventures and dangerous cruises of the destroyers and submarine chasers that were expected to guard the flotillas of troop ships and food ships through the submarine zones and mine fields.

Also in this fourth volume, George Belding, who had lived with his family for one summer in Seacove, joined the crew of the *Colodia* and was welcomed warmly by Philip Morgan and his closest friends. At this time, George's father, who was an exporter and ship owner, decided to go to Bahia, Brazil, in one of his own sailing

ships, the *Redbird*, taking his wife and George's sister, Lilian, with him.

Phoebe Morgan, Philip's older sister, was not strong, and the doctors had prescribed a sea voyage for her. Mr. Belding desired to have Dr. Morgan, Philip's father, go to Bahia and establish a clinic and hospital there for the employees of the shipping and exporting firm. Therefore Dr. Morgan took his two daughters with him on the voyage, Alice refusing to be left behind, and Lilian Belding being overjoyed to have the Morgan girls as her companions for the journey.

A German spy who escaped from a wrecked Zeppelin in England, and whom the four Navy Boys and George Belding almost succeeded in capturing, later crossed the ocean and joined the crew of the *Redbird* at New York. This German agent, with members of the *Redbird's* crew, determined to seize the American ship and make of it a "mother ship" for German U-boats which were to operate along the Atlantic coast of the Western Continent.

Pluckily, Lilian Belding secretly sent wireless messages of the plight of the *Redbird* and her passengers; and these messages were picked up by the radio operators on the *Colodia* when the destroyer was within a few hundred miles of the ship. The exciting race to the rescue of the *Redbird*, its recapture from the German agents,

the safe arrival of Mr. Belding's party in Bahia, and the return of the *Colodia* to Hampton Roads to be refitted, while the five friends went north to Seacove for a brief shore leave, completed the fourth volume of the series. That leads directly to these incidents already related in the present story.

Inside the burning enclosure of the big tent of Garboard & Strake's Colossal Circus and Menagerie there was a situation that for a time threatened serious consequences. Several of the performers in trying to check the fire were burned by the flaming gasoline.

The man in acrobat's costume who had run shrieking from the dressing tent as the tank burst seemed more reckless in endeavoring to quench the blaze than anybody else. The Navy Boys saw him seeking to smother the flames with a blanket.

Suddenly, the platform on which the tank had rested fell to the ground. The man in tights and spangles was knocked senseless, but fortunately he did not fall into the fire.

By this time the four young apprentice seamen who had caught hold of the hoisting rope had raised Al Torrance to the wires which made a network of tracks for the "flying fairies."

"Look out what you do up there, Torry!" shouted Phil Morgan, and perhaps his words



were heard by Al, for the latter looked down and waved his hand.

"By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland!" ejaculated "Frenchy" Donahue, "ain't he the cool la-ad? Did you ever see his beat?"

"He's all right!" cried George Belding, enthusiastically. "See! He is going to get that girl."

"Oi, oi!" groaned the philosophical Ikey. "It's always these girls. They're the ones that get us into trouble."

Had the small wire cables, on which the snap-lock at the shoulder blades of the flying fairies ran when the trapeze act was under way, been of hemp instead of wire, Torrance would have had a much easier task in getting to the imperiled girl. He had to clamber through the web of wires and crawl over them to get above her. No easy task!

In hitching herself to the wire the girl had become quite helpless; for without a push from one of the other performers who later were to follow the flying fairies into the rigging, none of the girls in harness could slide along the wires from end to end of the tent while the colored lights played upon them and the regular trapeze artists went through their gyrations just below the web of wires.

Torrance had always been a good reefer. His experience, as well as that of the other boys from

Seacove, antedated his joining the navy. The chums had made more than one trip to Bangor or Boston on two- and three-masted coasting vessels. Besides, since joining the navy and while at the training station before the United States went to war with Germany, the apprentices had had considerable schooling in "going aloft." Our Navy Boys must all be trained in seamanship of every kind.

Torrance, therefore, was at home in any rigging. He scrambled over the wires just as though he were five feet from the ground instead of fifty. Two or three of the wire stays broke under his weight and the cables sagged. But the youth threw himself along the web, distributing his weight as well as he could, and seized the shoulders of the girl who was endangered.

The flames were almost in her face. Ropes and pennons were charring in the fierce heat of the fire. Once she had turned her face toward Torrance, and the young sailor saw that it was tear-streaked and pale. She had evidently given up hope of escape.

But now he gave her a strong push and the harness-mechanism she wore carried her along the wire cable and out of range of the fire. She slid off toward the point where the other boys of the navy had hoisted Torrance into the rigging.

The latter now found himself in the path of the fire. The flames leaped up the main tent-pole, and of a sudden the youth found himself within the compass of the fire's heat. He felt as though he were shriveling in the blast!

A mad storm of yells, roars, and the sound of the smashing seats rose from below. The main pole of the tent was swaying. Some of the stays had burned through, and if that big stick fell the whole top would come down, smothering the panic-stricken audience under the canvas.

Meanwhile, nobody under the big top was in more danger than Al Torrance and the little "fairy" he had set out to rescue.

## CHAPTER III

### A GIRL ON THEIR HANDS

THE time that had elapsed since the fall of the gasoline tank and the bursting out of the fire could be counted in seconds rather than in minutes. Torrance had started instantly for the center of the big ring, with his friends after him. Half a minute had served to hoist him to the web-work of wire cables far up against the canvas roof of the big tent.

His scramble over the wires to the center pole occupied scarcely a long breath. Now he had whirled the girl away from the danger zone, and she fluttered half way across the tent, hanging face down from the wire.

"Come down, Torry! Come down!" shouted Mike Donahue from the ground, and the other boys joined in his appeal.

"That reckless young chump will be killed!" exclaimed a rough voice behind Torry's friends. Phil Morgan turned to see the red-faced ring-master. "The circus can't be responsible for you

sailors. Get out of here!" commanded the man.

"Guess we'll stop right here till Torry gets down," Morgan said.

"D'you hear me?" shouted the man, with a threatening gesture of his long-lashed whip.

"You make a crack at us with that whip, and we'll all pitch on you!" exclaimed George Belding. "There are other gobs here, too."

"Get him down, then!" commanded the ugly man.

But the friends Torrance had left below could do nothing just then to aid their chum. If he escaped and if the girl finally was saved, Torrance had to do most of the work himself.

Some of the circus employees were trying to put out the fire. They had dragged the unconscious man in tights and spangles out of the way of the flames. But nobody did more to aid him.

Indeed, there was too much confusion within the great tent for one to expect anything to be done toward safeguarding or helping the people. The audience was still fighting to escape. Gaps had been cut here and there in the side walls, and men, women, and children were struggling to get out.

Above, Torrance swung himself quickly over the wires in pursuit of the girl. She really was helpless; she must be released from the mechanism and aided to one of the ropes away from the vicinity of the fire.



But when Torrance got hold of the girl again, he found she had fainted. She hung a dead weight from the wire, and the young fellow knew he was not strong enough to hold her and descend the hoisting rope himself.

The boys below saw his trouble almost as quickly as he saw it himself. Phil Morgan, making a megaphone of his hands, shouted up to his chum:

"Pass the hook through her harness, Torry! We'll lower her down. Then come on down yourself."

But this was not so easily done as said. Torrance made a grab for the hook on the end of the hoisting rope, and secured it. But he could not grapple it into the back of the fairy's harness until he had released the girl from the wire cable.

It meant holding her dead weight for several seconds, and all with one hand and arm!

It would seem that this was impossible. But Torrance could see no other way of saving the girl. He lay flat across the wires, reached through them, and passed his right arm under the girl's body.

The hook of the hoisting rope was in his left hand. He put forth the best of his muscular power and lifted the girl. She hung across his straining right arm, which bore her whole weight.

In a flash he snapped open the patent mechanism that held her to the wire, inserting next the hook into the lacings of the harness she wore, just between her shoulders.

He felt himself sag, as the combined weight of his own and the girl's body came upon the smaller wires. With a loud "twang" one of the guys snapped. But the girl was secure, and let her swing free. For the moment, however, he was exhausted, and his right arm felt as though it had been severely wrenched. It was a question in his mind whether it would sustain him if he swung to the rope himself and allowed the boys to lower him with the rescued girl.

"Come down yourself, Torry!" shouted Phil Morgan from below. "The rope will hold you."

But Torrance hesitated. "Get the girl down safe, Whistler," he yelled. "Then I'll try it."

The center pole was actually swaying. If the guy wires parted it would fall and the wreck of the big tent would be complete. Torrance was really frightened by his situation. Who would not be? But his mind was clear and he remained cool.

He saw that the two smaller Seacove boys were lowering the unconscious girl. Morgan and George Belding ran for another dangling hoisting-rope. Torrance saw immediately that it was possible for him to reach this.

He lurched forward and with his good hand—his left—seized the rope. He drew the dangling hook toward him, passed the slack of the rope swiftly around his body under his arms, and made a Blackwall hitch which held the hook securely.

"Lower away!" he shouted, and let himself go.

The rope tightened about his body and the pressure was considerable. But his chums dropped him swiftly and not ungently, to the ground.

"Right-o!" exclaimed Belding. "You're all right, Al."

"Are you all right, Torry?" demanded Phil Morgan, with anxiety.

"Arm wrenched a little. How's that girl?"

He started for where the other boys held the little circus performer between them.

"Hi, Torry!" exclaimed the irrepressible Ikey, "your girl's coming to—so she is."

The color had quite gone from the countenance of the circus girl. Her eyes opened suddenly. They were big and brown. She gave no attention to any of the boys—not even to Torrance, who had done so much for her.

She broke away from Ikey and Donahue with a scream and cast herself down beside the injured circus performer on the ground.

"Father! Father! He's hurt!"

The man was quite unconscious and the

wound in his head bled considerably. Phil Morgan turned quickly to the ringmaster, who was scowling down upon the two, father and daughter.

"Aren't you going to do something for him?" asked Morgan.

"He'd better go to the hospital. Tim Waggoner isn't much good, anyway," growled the man.

"You're a nice chap—I don't think!" exclaimed Morgan. "Come on, boys, and get him out of here. We'll carry him somewhere and get a doctor."

He and Al and George at once picked up the injured performer. The yellow-haired girl, still sobbing, started with them toward a hole that had been cut in the side of the tent.

"Hey, you, Min!" exclaimed the ringmaster, "you go back to the dressing-tent with the other girls. Keep out from under foot till this riot is over. Your father will be cared for. Do you hear me?"

By the way the girl started and shrank from him it was plain that she feared what the brutal fellow might do to her. He was without doubt a man of evil temper.

"I—I——Oh, Jedden! let me go with father," she begged.

"D'you hear me, girl?" roared the fellow, and

actually snapped his whip as though he was ordering a dumb animal.

Phil Morgan gave over his share of the unconscious man to Belding and he stepped back toward the ringmaster with clenched fists. Al Torrance said to the unfortunate girl:

"Don't mind a thing he says. You come along with your father. We'll look out for you."

"Say!" shouted the ringmaster, "what are you yaps trying to do? Run off with our performers? Get over to the dressing-tent, Min!"

"You let the girl alone," advised Phil Morgan. "We don't know how seriously her father is hurt. She shall go with him. We'll take him to a doctor. There's no hospital in Rivermouth."

"You mind your business!" snapped the man. "You interfere with this circus and I'll call my bunch over here and clean you out."

"You start any 'Hey, Rube!' business," broke in George Belding firmly, "and we'll shout for our crowd. I bet there are fifty sailors here. If you want a fight we can give it to you."

"That's right!" cried Ikey and Donahue in chorus, and the latter added: "I'll run out and round 'em up!" and he started for the exit yelling "Hey, gob!" at the top of his voice.

"Say! that youngster *will* start a fight," objected Phil. "Go on, you fellows, and let's get out of here. Take the girl along, Ikey."



"You bet I will," said Rosenmeyer firmly, and seized the girl's hand.

Phil Morgan placed himself between the angry ringmaster and the party hastening with the Waggoners toward the exit of the tent.

"Come on, Whistler! Beat it!" cried Torrance as they went out through the slit in the canvas.

The circus employees had succeeded now in smothering the fire; but the two thousand people who had come to see the show were milling about the big tent like frightened cattle.

"I'll get you, yet!" yelled the ringmaster, shaking his fist after Morgan. "And those Waggoners won't get away. I tell you that girl is worth money to the show. Think we've boarded them and trained her for years to have her walk off like this?"

They got out of the tent while he still stood there, mouthing his threats and shaking the long-lashed whip. Morgan overtook his friends with the injured man and his daughter. The girl seemed to be only about twelve or fourteen years old.

Up came the excited Donahue with half a dozen other sailors at his heels.

"Where's the fight?" demanded one of the newcomers.

"Just stand around here, you fellows," begged Morgan, "and see that none of those circus fel-

lows follow us. We'll get the old man and the girl out of the way."

"We're on, mate," said a burly sailor. "Go as far as you like."

"They've got their hands full in there with the fire," said Belding. "Where shall we take this chap, Whistler?"

"There's a Doctor Brown just at the edge of town. I know the house. We'll carry him there. He'll patch this Waggoner up. Don't cry, girl."

"Her name is Minnie," said Al Torrance, who had been talking with her.

"Is he sure enough her father?" asked Donahue.

"Yes; he's my own father!" sobbed the girl. "And—and I haven't anybody else in the wo-world, except my brother, Luther. And I don't know how to find him."

"Pshaw!" said Donahue, trying to comfort her, "turn off the water-works, Sissy. We'll find your brother."

"Oh, no, you can't," replied the girl. "For he's over in England."

"That don't cut no ice," declared the confident Irish lad. "We've been to England, and we're likely to go again."

Whether this statement comforted the girl much or not, she stopped crying. They pushed

through the crowd with the unconscious performer. Nobody paid much attention to them, for outside the circle of light one would never have known what the boys carried between them.

They hurried through the open lots to the street on which Dr. Brown lived. Once there, only Morgan and Torrance went in with the man and his daughter. The two boys laid Waggoner upon the couch in the doctor's waiting room, and Minnie sat down beside her father and held his head in her lap.

The physician came bustling in, asking:

"What's this? Surgical case? A fall at the circus?"

"No," explained Phil Morgan. "This man works for the circus, all right. But he did not fall."

He sketched swiftly what had occurred while the doctor examined the wound in Waggoner's head. The girl looked on, nervously wringing her hands together.

"Don't be worried, girl," said the physician. "This wound isn't much. If he isn't hurt internally——"

"The plank struck him on the head and shoulder—that's all," said Phil Morgan.

"His shoulder is all right," said Dr. Brown.

He set to work cleansing the wound. Then he dressed it. The circus performer began to

show signs of returning consciousness. Color flowed into his painted cheeks and he breathed more heavily. His eyelids fluttered.

"Sit right where he can see you and soothe him," whispered Dr. Brown to the girl, stepping back from the couch. "He ought to rest—be quiet. The circus is no place for him."

"They sha'n't go back to the circus—not if *she* doesn't want to," growled Al Torrance.

The doctor glanced at him quizzically. Morgan pulled out some money and offered to pay the physician for his trouble.

"No," said Dr. Brown. "I guess it isn't your business to pay. And it is my right to help him. What more can you do for them?"

"We'll take the man and girl home with us," spoke up Torrance. "Hey, Whistler?"

"Just as you say, Al," rejoined his chum.

"Don't tell me anything more about it, then," said Dr. Brown, smiling. "Those circus people are clannish. They will be hunting for him and the girl—especially if they are of any value to the troupe."

"The girl is," said Morgan. "They did not want her to come with us. The ringmaster was a brute about it—and about the man, too."

"Get them both out of the way, then, while you can."

Meanwhile the injured performer opened his

eyes and saw his daughter sitting before him in safety.

"Ah, Minnie! Is—is it you, girl?" he whispered. "I—I dreamed you were being hurt. Where—what—."

"Never mind now, father," Minnie said. "How's your poor head?"

"Sort of light. Lighter than 'tis usually, Minnie," he sighed, and struggled to a sitting posture on the couch, blinking about in an owl-like way at the others in the room.

The doctor tapped his own forehead and looked at the boys significantly.

"Not strong, not strong," he whispered, indicating plainly his opinion of the man's mental state.

Just then there came a loud rap on the office door.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE RUNAWAYS

"SHALL I let you folks out the back way?" asked Dr. Brown. "I don't want any trouble here with that circus crew."

"Hey, Whistler!" sounded a voice from the other side of the door.

"That's Frenchy," said Al. "Hold on."

Morgan went to the door and opened it a crack. The eager voice of Michael Donahue immediately said:

"One of those gobs came over from the show lot. He says the circus is already packing up to get out. The fire's out, but the bosses say the tent isn't safe and a lot of the folks are howling for their money. But he heard that ringmaster, Jedden, say he was going to get that girl or know the reason why."

"Uh-huh?" growled Torrance. "Then he's going to know a lot before he gets through. Say, Miss Minnie, can your father walk?"

"He will be all right when you get him out

in the air," said the physician, who despite his kindness evidently wanted no trouble with the circus people.

"Father, will you come with me and these boys? They are kind. One of them saved my life," said Minnie Waggoner.

"Yes. I—I can walk," murmured the half-dazed performer.

"Say," put in Donahue, through the crack of the door, "can't you get something for them to wear? That Jedden will trail us right through the town if they come out that way."

"Oh, cracky!" ejaculated Al Torrance.

"Wait," said Dr. Brown kindly. "You come into the sitting room, girl, and Mrs. Brown will find something to cover you. I'll get her father something of my own," he added to the boys.

While the doctor and Minnie were out of the room the boys tried to get the circus performer to talk. But either he was naturally a mental defective, or the rap on the head he had sustained so recently still affected him.

"You boys are sailors," he murmured after a time. "I am a sailor, too."

"But you acted in that circus?" asked Morgan.

"I am an acrobat and trapeze performer. Minnie rides, as well as acts on the trapeze. It is a hard life for the girl. But we have to live. Won't Jedden come for us?"

"Say! you're afraid of that Jedden, aren't you?" demanded Al Torrance.

"He—he can be awfully mean," hesitated the man. "I don't like to have him mean to Minnie."

"He isn't going to be again," declared Torrance, with conviction. "Whistler, let's take 'em with us."

"Take 'em where?" his chum demanded.

"Home to Seacove."

"Thought we'd decided to do that already," returned his chum coolly, and began to whistle.

"My father will help them," said Torrance. "I know."

"We've got room at our house for them," Morgan rejoined. "With father and the girls gone, there's lots of room. We'll fix 'em up till Mr. Waggoner gets better."

Minnie Waggoner appeared again, but now dressed for the street in a long raincoat that Mrs. Brown had found for her. The doctor brought an old coat and a pair of trousers, as well as a hat, for the girl's father.

"All my other clothes are in my trunk at the circus," said the girl, looking at Al Torrance with her big brown eyes. "I know Jedden won't give them to me."

"Don't worry," said Al, gulping down something that stuck in his throat as he looked at her. "We'll find some clothes for you."

"Yours wouldn't fit her," giggled Donahue at the door.

"Better hurry now, boys," said the worried physician. "Don't have any trouble with the circus people if you can help it."

"Those gobs we found over on the show lot will hold 'em back," said Donahue. "Come on, fellers."

"Right down to the dock, boys," advised Phil Morgan, following with a hand under Waggoner's arm to steady him.

There were quite a number of people on the street, either walking to or from the circus grounds. But nobody gave the little party bound for the dock any special notice.

"'Once aboard the lugger!'" chuckled George Belding. "What do you know about running away with the he-ro-wine—and her father into the bargain!"

But Phil Morgan would not laugh. He only whistled thoughtfully. He saw that this was a very serious affair for Al Torrance, at least; and perhaps for them all.

It was not at all certain that the circus management had no rights regarding Minnie Waggoner and her father. Perhaps there was a contract, or something of the kind. The girl might be older than she appeared, or there might be some binding arrangement between her father, as her natural guardian, and the man Jedden.

Phil was determined, however, to see the matter through. Mr. Waggoner was evidently in no condition to travel about the country with a show of the character of Garboard & Strake's Colossal Circus and Menagerie. Jedden would have abandoned him without a qualm when he thought Waggoner was seriously hurt.

The trapeze performer walked more strongly between George Belding and Philip Morgan than he had when he started from the doctor's office; yet they were some time in reaching the dock off which the *Spray* was moored. Ikey shouted for the boatkeeper, who was some minutes in coming with his rowboat.

Michael Donahue, meanwhile, waited at the head of the wharf to watch for any pursuit. And he did not wait for long.

"Hey, Whistler!" he cried, "there's a bunch coming. I don't like their looks."

"Don't try to scare us, Frenchy," urged Belding. "It is too dark up the street for you to see them."

"I spotted them under the corner light," returned the Irish lad. "That Jedden is leading them. I saw his tall hat."

"Ready to repel boarders, then, boys!" exclaimed Morgan vigorously, and he led Belding and Ikey back to the head of the dock. Torrance remained to put Waggoner and his daughter aboard the small boat.

It was Jedden and several canvasmen—burly fellows who carried stakes in their hands. Circus men are wicked fighters, and attendants of the small one-night circuses engage in many fights with local rowdies. Though the Navy Boys had seen little fist-fighting, save friendly sparring with gloves, which has always been popular in the navy, they were not likely to show the white feather before half a dozen ruffians like these who accompanied the ringmaster.

“Now we’ve got you garbies,” sang out Jedden, with satisfaction. “You give up that girl, or we’ll make you sick.”

“The girl is with her father. He ought to have charge of her,” Morgan replied. “We’re not going to give either of them up unless they want to return to you.”

“I don’t care what you do to Waggoner. Tim isn’t much good, anyway. He’s a nut, all right. But the girl’s worth something.”

“Her father is her guardian.”

“He ain’t fit to guard anybody. I’m her guardian, if you want to know. And I have come to take her. Get out of the way before these bully-boys of mine knock your heads off!”

“If those fellows are so good at fighting,” put in Belding sharply, “why aren’t they in the army or navy? They want fighters just now. There’s a war on; hadn’t you heard about it?”



"You shut your mouth!" commanded Jedden, with increased anger. "I need all these men."

"Who told you that a fly-by-night circus was an essential industry?" responded Belding. "I warrant some of these fellows are within the draft age. You try to make us trouble, or bother that girl and her father, and we'll get the United States Marshall of this district after you."

"Good for you, George!" murmured Morgan.

A shrill whistle sounded from Torrance. "Come on, fellows!" he cried, in addition.

The four at the head of the dock turned instantly and raced toward the small boat.

"Hate to turn tail and run," muttered Phil Morgan. "But guess this is best, George."

"Sure!" agreed the New York youth. "If we can reach that boat before them—"

For Jedden and his gang were pounding along the wharf after them, shouting maledictions as they ran.

## CHAPTER V

### MORE ABOUT THE WAGGONERS

IKEY ROSENMEYER and Michael Donahue jumped into the small boat under the end of the dock at once; but Belding and Morgan turned at last and faced the circus crew.

"Get 'em, boys!" Jedden was yelling to his cohorts, and he was unwise enough to be in the lead as they reached the Navy Boys.

Belding and Morgan made a simultaneous attack upon the loud-mouthed ringmaster. His tall hat sailed into the bay, and he went to the planks of the wharf with a mighty crash. Then the two Navy Boys leaped down into the boat.

"Pull away!" shouted Morgan. "They'll find a boat in a minute."

"Not so near, Mr. Morgan," said the boat-keeper. "And I'll have you aboard in a jiffy."

His rowboat was heavily laden, but he propelled it quickly to the side of the schooner in which the boys had come from Seacove.

The threats Jedden roared from the end of

the wharf did not in the least disturb the Navy Boys; but the possibility that the circus hands might row out and board the *Spray* was not to be overlooked.

"Look alive," advised Phil Morgan, "and we'll soon be out of here. Then let 'em threaten! Much good may it do them."

Under Phil Morgan's command, the boys jumped smartly to the work of getting the yacht under weigh. Her anchor had not been dropped, but she was buoyed, bow and stern. They slipped these moorings, and under a puff of wind the jib filled and she headed out into the wide roadstead of Rivermouth.

"Tail on to that sheet, boys!" shouted Phil. "Up with the mainsail! Look alive now! We want to get home sometime to-night."

He had taken the wheel himself. The Waggoners he had sent below into the cabin in which there was a lighted lamp. It was a misty night, and not even a star penetrated with its rays the gloom hovering over the water; but the sea was scarcely ruffled by the wind.

As the *Spray* tacked for the open sea she was under her heavy canvas, topsails and jib. Although the wind was so light, all this spread of cloth was bound to give the craft a certain speed. The water murmured along her sides and frothed under the bows. She began, as yachtsmen say, "to walk."

Torrance went down into the cabin a little later and brought up Minnie. Her father had fallen asleep in one of the berths.

"Is he always just as he seems now, Minnie?" Morgan asked with some hesitancy. "He does not seem quite—quite like other people."

"He never has been himself since he fell from aloft aboard the ship on which we crossed the ocean to America. He was hurt quite badly, and the captain put us ashore at Halifax. Father stayed in the hospital there for some time. We did not know anybody on this side, and I was very unhappy. So when father got better he went to work for the circus that was then showing in the Dominion, and they took me, too. Sarah Jedden, the ringmaster's wife, was good to me. But she's dead. Jedden is an awful man.

"Father was always very brave aloft when he was aboard ship, and the fall he had did not seem to bother him; only I don't think he remembers well, and so people take advantage of him."

"But now?" inquired Morgan. "To-night, I mean. Does he seem—"

"I guess he's all right," Al Torrance broke in earnestly. "I looked at him just now. But say, Minnie, haven't you got anybody—any folks—but just him?"

"Only the people at the circus. Some of them were very kind to us; but they were afraid of

Jedden, too. Mamma died when I was very little," continued Minnie. "She had been married before she married father, and she had a son named Luther Martin. He was such a kind boy! He looked after me when I was a baby while father was away at work. Father worked in the ropewalk at Plymouth then. He had given up going to sea when he married mother."

"Then is he really a sailor?" asked the interested Torrance.

"Yes. Well, Luther's folks found him out. They are great folks,—you know, very rich and proud. They made father give him up, although he was going to school, and all. But of course, father wasn't really related to Luther. Luther did not want to leave us. And, oh how I cried!

"Luther promised to come to see me often; but they never let him, I fancy. His grand-mamma was such a stern lady!

"But Luther wrote to me and told me not to forget him and that he would come and get me when he grew up and could do as he pleased. His last letter—but that was ever so long ago!—said he was a midshipman on the *Belphoron* and that he was bound on a voyage around the world.

"Before he got back father lost his place in the ropewalk and said we'd better go to America where work was more plentiful. So we came," concluded Minnie Waggoner. "And I never

heard from Luther again. After he fell on ship-board father hasn't seemed to remember much about Luther, only he says Luther is a regular toff."

"That means 'swell,' doesn't it?" said George Belding.

"Yes, sir."

"How old is he now?" Phil Morgan asked.

"He must be twenty-two years old. He is seven years older than I am. I am older than I look to be," said the girl.

"Maybe he's been killed in this war," put in Ikey thoughtlessly.

"Oh, I don't believe it!" cried the girl. "Don't say that!"

"Of course he hasn't," growled Torrance, kicking Ikey in the shins to admonish him. "Look at us! We've been a long time in the war, and nothing has happened to us yet."

"Ask Whistler about that," muttered Donahue, under his breath, for Morgan had experienced some very exciting adventures since the boys had been assigned to the *Colodia*.

However, Al Torrance proceeded to cheer Minnie Waggoner about her half-brother's safety. He even went so far as to promise her that when the *Colodia* returned to the other side he would make inquiry for Midshipman Martin. Maybe, Al said, he could find him.



"But he isn't a midshipman now," said Morgan wisely. "How old was he when he entered the navy?"

"He was fourteen," said Minnie.

"Yes. They take 'em young, all right," Torrance said. "Right out of the cradle. We used to have that system in our navy, didn't we?"

"Don't know," his chum returned. "But they don't do it now. This Luther Martin, if he's seen any service, may be pretty well advanced by now—quite a gold stripe."

"Cracky, yes!" exclaimed Torrance.

"Oi, oi!" ejaculated Ikey. "Could he be an admiral yet?"

"Your granny's aunt!" exclaimed Torrance.

"But he'll be a lieutenant, I imagine."

"Anyway," George Belding said kindly, "we'll try to find him for you, Minnie."

And to this statement the other boys chorused "Sure!"

It was getting late in the evening, and, with the head wind that confronted them, Morgan knew they would be late in beating into Seacove harbor. So he advised Minnie to go below and get into one of the other berths, as long as her father was sleeping so peacefully. The boys were all determined to remain on deck until they reached home.

The *Spray* made a long leg out of Rivermouth

Bay, and Morgan hoped to reach Seacove on the next tack. The friends crowded into the stern and talked in low voices about the Waggoners. Minnie's story had interested more than Torrance. All the Navy Boys wished to do something for the circus performers.

"They can stay with mother," Morgan said, "just as well as not, until father and the girls come back from South America. We need somebody to keep the place neat outside, and all that. Surely Minnie's father can do that."

"Looks to me as though his head wasn't right at all," Belding remarked.

"But of course, that won't matter," Torrance eagerly put in. "He's harmless enough."

"Torry has sure got a good word for Timothy Waggoner!" chuckled Donahue.

"Oi, oi!" agreed Ikey. "You have it right, Frenchy. But ain't he the father of such a fine girl yet?"

"You kids are a nuisance!" growled Al Torrance.

Morgan was peering about now for the lights that made the entrance to Seacove Harbor visible. The night was thick, and in the distance it appeared that a haze was forming over the land. A land fog is a mean thing to blanket a mariner trying to make port.

"The fog is going to swallow us, sure enough,"

said Michael Donahue. "Somebody ought to get out and push."

"I'd do it," Ikey rejoined soberly, "only I don't like wetting my feet."

None of them had an idea that danger lurked behind the fog bank. So they joked and talked, while the *Spray* made a rather slow tack to seaward. At length Phil figured out that they had made their objective and could run down for the entrance to Seacove Harbor. He shifted the wheel, and through the thick haze thought he caught a glimpse of the South Light. The beacon burned yellow in the mist for a minute; then it was wiped out.

"Don't like this much," the helmsman admitted to George Belding. "Blundering through this fog is a dangerous matter. There's Sea Gull Reef, and—"

"What's that?" demanded George sharply.

A mournful "Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!" sounded in the fog—a siren of some size; but the direction of it could only be guessed.

"Hey! Get out your scare, Torry!" shouted Phil.

"That must be the horn at the lighthouse," said Al Torrance. "There surely wouldn't be any craft out here."

"Even the sub. patrols don't run in so close, do they?" asked Belding.

"Ahoy!" shouted Donahue, who had gone forward. "I see a light."

"Isn't it the South Light?" bawled Morgan, clinging to the wheel-spokes and trying to peer into the fog.

"I—don't—know," drawled the Irish lad. "By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland!—Whoo! Blow your head off Torry! 'Tis a big ship!"

The boy came dashing back from the bow of the yacht. Out of the mist loomed suddenly the high, slate-colored bow of a patrol boat. In the sudden bursting of the fog-blanket the boys could even see the huge black letters on her bow:

"S. P. 203."

"Put her over, Whistler!" Belding shouted.

"We're going to be smashed! Oi, Oi!" shrieked Ikey Rosenmeyer.

Al Torrance threw away the foghorn he had been tooting and dived for the cabin door. He had remembered the Waggoners, father and daughter, shut in below!

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CATASTROPHE

HAD Phil Morgan brought the *Spray* up into the wind's eye the yacht would surely have been dashed by the sea against the slate-colored side of the patrol boat. There was a chance that they could cross the bows of the larger vessel, and he took that chance.

He whirled the wheel over, and her sticks fairly groaned as the bow of the *Spray* swept about on this new tack. She was carrying all her larger canvas and its weight was considerable. There was no time to relieve her of any of it. To put a sailing craft under such a strain was in itself a very dangerous performance.

But the schooner responded handsomely to her helm, and near as the Submarine Patrol 203 was, the Navy Boys thought for a moment that she would escape.

The blast of the fog siren aboard the steam craft sounded again and another light appeared at her rail. Ikey and Michael Donahue shrieked

in chorus. The bulk of the other craft plunged down upon the *Spray*.

She struck the schooner almost amidships. There was a ripping, tearing sound, as of a circular saw going through a sheet of veneer. The steel prow of S. P. 203 rose upon a wave, and with it rose the shaking hull of the *Spray*.

Her topmasts came down with an awful crash. The canvas was stripped from the falling spars, while the hull of the schooner rolled over till she lay on her beam-ends, and into the sea were dashed all those upon her deck.

With a groaning, rending noise, that filled the ears of the boys as they went under, the hulk of the *Spray* was beaten beneath the sea and S. P. 203 passed over the spot where the schooner-yacht had floated.

The patrol boat had already slowed down; but her engine-force carried her some cable-lengths beyond the scene of the catastrophe. There were no cries; it was as though she had wiped out completely the schooner and her crew.

The submarine patrol dropped a boat from her davits, into which a crew and petty officer had swarmed. Under the propulsion of six oars this small craft raced back to the scene. In spite of the fog that was growing thicker every moment they observed in one place a mass of tangled spars and slit canvas and riggings. In



another was the hulk of the *Spray*, turned turtle.

Between these two remnants of the wrecked yacht several heads bobbed in the choppy waves. The small boat raced to them. There were four survivors, and the crew of the boat hauled them quickly inboard.

All these survivors were more or less overcome by their submersion in spite of the fact that they were good swimmers. They lay for half a minute gasping and coughing in the boat's bottom.

"How many were there of you aboard that boat?" demanded the petty officer.

"Are—aren't we all here?" gasped George Belding.

"Who is here?" demanded Phil Morgan, starting up and glaring about the boat.

"I'm here, Whistler! And so's Ikey," declared Michael Donahue.

"Where's Torry?" ejaculated Morgan, in horror.

"Where are those Waggoners?" added Belding.

"How many of you were there?" demanded the officer from the patrol boat again.

"Seven," groaned Morgan.

"Three missing!"

"A man, a boy, and a girl," said George hoarsely.

"Oh, they can't be lost!" cried Ikey. "Look for them, Mister! Look about! Torry could swim like a fish."

"They were in the cabin," said Morgan. "Torry went down there to get out the girl and her father. When the boat went over perhaps they were shut in."

"They're drowned, then," said the petty officer, not without sympathy. "You can see the keel of that craft is scarcely above water. Her cabin is full, and if they were in it, they are drowned already. Pull away, boys! We'll look all around for them. They might have got out."

The small boat was rowed back and forth and around the wreckage. They shouted Torry's name again and again. No response came out of the fog.

Finally the petty officer gave it up. He had found out now who and what the boys from the *Spray* were.

"It is too bad," was his rather inadequate comment. "That chum of yours likely lost his life trying to swim out with those other two. Or else he and they are drowned inside the cabin."

"The tide and current will both carry that hulk into Seacove Harbor. Maybe you can recover the bodies to-morrow. I guess the lieutenant will swing her back and put you boys ashore at your home town."

Morgan and his companions were silent. They believed the petty officer had put the circumstances correctly. Torrance and the Waggoners were gone.

So they made no objection to the boat's return to the submarine patrol craft, which lay on the sea not far away. The small boat was pulled under her heaving side, and the four half-drowned boys clambered aboard first.

The lieutenant in command faced them on the open deck. He listened to the chief petty officer's report; then he wheeled on the four Navy Boys.

"Why were you running without lights?" he demanded.

"Well, sir, we didn't see but one light on your boat," Morgan said, "and that was not a ship-light."

"That's orders, young man. We're supposed not to show lights on this patrol."

"That is just the trouble, sir," George Belding said suavely. "You see, we know about those orders, and we thought it referred to all craft. So we did not light the bow lanterns."

"Humph! I don't see that anything can be done about it. I am exceedingly sorry that your friends are lost. We will run you into Seacove. Perhaps the bodies will come ashore with tomorrow's tide."

Cold comfort! The four friends huddled to-

gether around the boiler below, trying to dry their clothing, and only speaking now and then in low voices. Torry was gone! It seemed impossible that they would ever see him alive again. The thought struck coldly upon their hearts.

"But he was a brave fellow," sobbed Mike Donahue. "He lost his life trying to get that girl and her father out. Oh, fellers! we won't never see Torry's like again."

Their hearts responded to this cry; but Morgan said nothing aloud. They shook hands with the lieutenant silently an hour later when they went ashore at Seacove.

It was now early morning—past two o'clock. The quartette of Navy Boys separated dolefully enough. Donahue and Ikey Rosenmeyer went to their respective homes on the Shore Road. Morgan and Belding made their way to the Morgan house on the outskirts of the little town.

They passed the Torrance house. George muttered:

"Isn't it lucky poor Torry has no mother?"

"But his father was so proud of him!" groaned Philip Morgan. "I—I can't tell him to-night."

"I should say not! I wouldn't think of banging a man up in the middle of the night, Whistler, to tell him his son is drowned."

"But he's got to be told," said Morgan hopelessly.

They reached Phil's home and crept in so that Mrs. Morgan should not be disturbed. Instead of occupying their separate rooms the two boys turned in together in Phil's bed. Somehow they both felt a desire for company.

"I can't make it seem real that Torry is drowned," were Phil Morgan's last words.

They both slept—of course they did. They were bodily tired. They did not awaken until it was broad daylight and Mrs. Morgan was banging the stove-poker on the back stairs to call them to breakfast.

## CHAPTER VII

### JUST A FOOLISH IDEA

PHIL MORGAN had been able to sleep; but he could not eat his breakfast. He swallowed a cup of coffee as he and George Belding told Mrs. Morgan, in bitter sentences, of their adventures the night before.

"Oh, poor, dear Torry!" cried the doctor's wife. "And that girl and her father! It is awful!"

"That is what it is," said George. "I don't see how Whistler can tell Al's father."

"This terrible, terrible war!" groaned the woman, her apron at her eyes. "I am of a tremble all the time that the doctor and Phoebe and Alice are away. And, of course, I never have a bit of peace while Phil is aboard ship."

"That has nothing to do with what happened last night," said Phil.

"If there was no war there would have been no patrol boat to run you down," said his mother.



"Well, I guess that's so," admitted George.

Phil was not attending. He swallowed the last of his coffee and sighed.

"I can't make it seem real that Torry is drowned," he muttered.

"You said that last night, Whistler," George observed.

"Come on out," said the boy who seemed to have quite forgotten to whistle on this sad morning.

There were two roads to town—and to Al Torrance's house. Phil Morgan took the longest way. It was down to and along the open beach of Seacove Harbor. All the wharves and fish houses were on the town side of the wide bay.

But there was a group of boys and men out toward the South Light. They were watching something floating on the surface of the harbor, not far off shore—something that glinted in the sunshine, flashing as the water heaved it up and down.

Belding grabbed his friend's arm. "There's the *Spray*," he said.

Morgan nodded. It was the copper sheathing of the overturned boat that reflected the sunlight.

"Say, Whistler!" gasped Belding, thinking of it for the first time, "what will we say to Burgess? He will be as sore as a boil about it."

"About our losing the *Spray*?"

"Yes."

"Of course, she was run down by a Government boat. But there is no redress for that. Wartime, and all. We borrowed the schooner. Guess we'll have to find some way of satisfying Burgess."

"It's going to take more than candy money," sighed George. "I expect father—"

"We won't ask our fathers—yet," said Morgan decidedly. "Let's see how bad the boat is hurt."

"Why, boy!" ejaculated Belding, "she's a wreck."

"I guess everything above her deck is a total loss—or near about," agreed Phil Morgan. "But I bet her hull isn't hurt much. Otherwise she wouldn't be drifting out there the way she is. And the biggest cost of a schooner is below her rail."

"I suppose you are right, Whistler. "Shall we try to salvage her?"

"We'll row out there and look at her, anyway," said Morgan with more decision. "And Torry—I can't make it seem real that he's drowned, George."

"Don't say that again, Whistler! It's uncanny," groaned Belding.

There was a skiff with a pair of oars in it

pulled up on the shore near by. The boys took it, as there was nobody in sight to ask. Morgan rowed out to the hull of the overturned *Spray*. It rode three feet or more above the surface. The spars and rigging of the schooner had gone ashore on the south cape, but Morgan believed the craft's hull could be righted, pumped out, and easily repaired at the shipyard across the harbor.

"But that won't bring back Torry and that girl and her father," groaned Morgan.

"Do—do you suppose the bodies are in the cabin?" whispered Belding.

"What's that?" demanded Phil Morgan, suddenly dropping the oars.

"Do—do you suppose—"

"Oh, hush!" exclaimed Phil. "Listen!"

Belding's lips remained parted. He listened intently.

"Glory!" he muttered at last, "what is that?"

They were too far from the shore to hear the voices of the men and boys on the beach. And, indeed, this was no voice Morgan and Belding both heard.

It was a tapping—a hollow knocking sound. It seemed to come from inside the heaving hulk of the overturned *Spray*.

The boys looked at each other in, not only amazement, but in a species of growing fear. There was something more than unusual about

the sound. It was no idle rapping of a piece of spar, for instance, on the under side of the hull.

Once more the sound came to their strained ears—first quick, then slow, then quick and sharp again. None of the raps were loud, however; it could not have been heard—this sound—ten yards from the drifting wreck of the schooner. As the skiff in which the two boys sat drifted nearer to the stern of the turtle-turned craft, the rapping became more distinct.

“Great heavens, Whistler! what is that?” gasped Belding, finding his voice once more.

“I—don’t—know. There it is again, just the same as before.”

It was a fact to be easily noted that the repetition of the rapping was in a series of sounds which was exactly alike each time: First quick, then slow, then quick again.

Belding’s eyes grew round with wonder. He raised his hand and seemed to be beating time to the hollow rappings within the hull of the *Spray*. These beats were:

One, two, three, four—quickly.

One—quickly.

O-o-n-e-e—slowly.

One, two, three, four, five—quickly.

“What’s the matter with you?” demanded Morgan, staring at this “beating time” in wonder. “Have you gone crazy?”

"My gracious! I believe I have," gasped his friend. "That's Morse, Whistler."

"What's Morse?"

"That rapping. Plain! There it goes again," and he began to count. "One, two, three, four *dots* is 'H.' One *dot's* 'e.' Dash is 'l.' Those last five raps mean 'p.' American Morse, Whistler, not Continental. Wireless stuff. Don't you understand?"

"I—I— But what does it spell?"

"It spells 'Help!' Whistler!" cried Belding. "You know Torry was learning radio work under Sparks aboard the *Colodia*. He's not drowned! He's rapping out 'help!' inside the skin of that wreck. He's alive, Whistler! He's alive!"

Belding was crying frankly. Phil Morgan seemed dazed. Yet all the time he had been unable to believe that Al Torrance was drowned! It had not been "just a foolish idea" of his, after all!

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE PROMISE

PHIL MORGAN picked up the oars and without another word pulled away from the wreck. Belding tried to stay him, demanding:

"What are you going to do, Whistler? Don't you believe what I say? That rapping spells 'Help!' Torry's alive, boy!"

"I know it," snapped out the other, straining at the oars.

"Then?"

"Get an ax. Chop a hole in that hull. Let him out," declared Morgan, between puffs.

"But let me answer the boy," cried Belding. "Let's tell him we're here."

"No time to lose," declared Morgan. "Don't you know they must be short of air? Wonder they haven't smothered. Great goodness, George! It's awful!"

"I never thought of that," confessed Belding. "Do you suppose they are suffering?"

"Didn't that rapping sound mighty faint to



you?" jerked out Phil. "Cabin must have filled with water. They couldn't get out. Torry found the hatch into the hold and they crept through. Three of 'em! Think of it. Only a little foul air to breathe!"

He said nothing more after that, but pulled the skiff as hard as he could toward the nearest fish-cleaning shanty.

In five minutes the skiff grounded, and, pulling in the oars, Phil Morgan leaped out and splashed through the shallow water to the shanty.

"You get her headed around, George," he shouted to his friend. "We're going right back."

The shanty was not locked, of course. He found a short iron bar and an ax, and came running with them down to the boat before Belding had managed to get the skiff headed out into the harbor again. Morgan placed the implements in the skiff and quickly got the craft headed for the overturned *Spray*.

Those on the beach were watching the two boys, but they seemed to have no idea what they were about until Morgan crawled out of the skiff on to the hull of the schooner near the stern. Belding handed him the iron bar, and at once the active young fellow began wrenching off the sheets of copper which ran along the keel of the overturned craft on either side.

At this some of the men began to shout at the

two young fellows. Phil gave them not the slightest attention. He ripped off two sheets of copper, and then demanded the ax of his friend.

When he swung this implement the chips began to fly and the spectators ashore uttered louder cries than ever.

"They are getting out a boat," Belding gasped.

"And I'm going to get Torry out—and those others—if they are alive!" exclaimed Phil Morgan.

Again and again he sank the blade of the ax into the bottom planks of the *Spray*. She was a well built boat and was reinforced on either side of the keel. Morgan cut through both bottoms. Then suddenly he and Belding heard a cry. It was not from the men who had tumbled into the boat and were now pulling toward the wreck.

"They're alive!" shrieked George Belding.

"Is that you, Whistler?" came a faint voice from within the hull of the schooner.

"You bet you!" replied Morgan between strokes, and with more emphasis than elegance of speech.

"Hurrah!" yelled Belding.

The owner of the *Spray*, Mr. Burgess, stood up in the approaching boat.

"I'll give you more'n three cheers!" he shouted. "You boys have done enough to my boat. I'll have the law on you for this."

But Phil Morgan did not heed him. He made the hole through the hull large enough for a man to pass through. Then he laid down the ax and knelt to help the first of the castaways out of the hole of the *Spray*.

"Are they all right, Torry?" he gasped.

"I am, Mister," said Minnie Waggoner as her arms and head appeared through the ragged hole.

"And your father?" demanded Belding, as he helped Phil lift the girl out through the hole.

"He's not so good. We thought we were going to be stifled. Only Mr. Torry wouldn't give up."

They placed the girl carefully in the skiff before the boat with Mr. Burgess reached the spot. He had stopped threatening Philip Morgan when he realized the reason for the breaking through the *Spray's* bottom planking.

"Where are you, Torry?" gasped Morgan, kneeling down to try to peer into the dark interior of the overturned schooner.

"All right, Whistler. Give us a hand with Mr. Waggoner," replied Al.

The circus performer was unconscious. By main strength Torrance pushed the wounded man up through the orifice. Waggoner's bandaged head came first, and then his shoulders. These Morgan and Belding both seized. They hauled the unconscious man out of the hold.

The second small boat reached the hull of the

*Spray*. Burgess and his companions were excited enough—too excited to be of any help to Morgan and George Belding.

The boys laid Waggoner in the skiff, his head in Minnie's lap. Then they helped Al Torrance out of the hold of the wreck.

"We'll see you about putting the schooner back into shape, Mr. Burgess," George Belding said to the *Spray's* owner. "We'll make everything all right."

"Don't matter, boy! Don't matter!" exclaimed Mr. Burgess. "We heard Torrance and that man and little girl were drowned. My goodness, it's wonderful! They being safe, nothing else matters."

"Will you look out for the *Spray*, then, Mr. Burgess?" Belding asked.

"Yes, sir. Leave it to me," said her owner. "This is a most wonderful thing! Providential!"

Phil was already at the oars of the skiff. The little boat was really overloaded, but he rowed carefully.

"How did you feel in there, Torry?" asked Belding curiously.

"Sick enough. And cold, no name! I bet you Minnie will be sick."

"He was just as good to us as gold," exclaimed the English girl, gazing at Torrance admiringly. "He's almost as good as my brother, Luther."

Torrance was quite overcome by this praise. He actually turned red and looked away.

The skiff came to the shore at the foot of the street on which the Morgan house stood. Minnie had bathed her father's face with water which Belding dipped up in the bail, and the trapeze performer slowly came to consciousness.

They had almost to lift him out to the shore when Morgan had driven the skiff's keel well up on to the sand. Mr. Waggoner managed to walk, but he leaned heavily upon Phil and Belding.

They were some time in getting to the Morgan house; and before they did so the whole neighborhood had got some sort of story of the affair. Phil's mother came running from the house to the gate.

"Oh, Philip! Philip! how could you come home, and leave poor Torry in that yacht's hold?" she cried hysterically.

"Well, do you suppose I did it on purpose?" he returned gruffly. "And here's Minnie Waggoner and her father, who were with Torry, too."

"We had some time, Mrs. Morgan," said Al Torrance, rather faintly. "Haven't you got a hunk of cake—or a sandwich—or something? I haven't eaten a thing since we were at Yancey's restaurant last evening, except the popcorn we were eating when the gasoline tank at the circus blew up. And I'd only just got one bite of that."

"Goodness me, what boys!" sighed the doctor's wife. "I believe there never were such before. You and Phil manage to get into more trouble—"

"Don't leave me out of it, Mrs. Morgan," begged George Belding.

"And Ikey and Frenchy usually have their share in anything that's pulled off," declared Torrance, beginning to grin.

"Come in! Come in!" urged Phil Morgan's mother. "This poor girl! How pretty she is! But, child! are those clothes under that coat all you've got?"

"Mine are all in our trunk at the circus," said Minnie hesitatingly. "And I know Jedden won't let me have them."

Mrs. Morgan became instantly interested in Minnie and her father. Phil had said enough about them at breakfast-time to induce the woman to offer shelter for the two until Waggoner should be able to do something for himself and his daughter.

But Al Torrance was going to have some part in that! While he was eating hurriedly before running home to assure the Torrance family that he was all right, he whispered to Phil's mother that he would have his father put some money into her hands for the use of Minnie and Mr. Waggoner.

"She's an awfully nice kid and I want to do something for her," he told his chum's mother. "You can see she's nice and pretty yourself."

"I guess she will be all right, Torry, when I get some of Alice's clothes on her," replied Mrs. Morgan.

Before Torrance left for home he spoke to Minnie privately. Their night in the overturned hull of the *Spray*, when they had scarcely hoped to be rescued, had naturally made the boy and girl very good friends.

"You are the very nicest boy, Mr. Torry—excepting Luther—that I ever knew. Yes you are!" she told him.

"All right. You praise me all you want to. I can stand it," he said, grinning. "And when we go back to England—for the *Colodia* is sure to go across again—I'll look for your brother. Sure!"

"Oh, will you, Mr. Torry?" cried the girl.

"It's a promise," Al assured her.



## CHAPTER IX

### OFF AGAIN

"WELL, mates, we've got to shove off. Can't stand by any longer. Duty calls. We've got to up anchor an' slip out o' this roadstead."

Thus observed Frenchy Donahue in his best seaman's lingo, as he burst into Mr. Rosenmeyer's delicatessen store, where his mates were gathered together.

"What's the matter with the child?" demanded Al Torrance, recovered now from his very serious adventure inside the *Spray's* hull. "Is that something you are practising to speak at the next Sunday school concert?"

"Yes, where do you get that stuff?" demanded Ikey himself, who, with an apron over his sailor's clothes, was serving behind the counter. "Is it a joke yet?"

"Just as fine a joke as ever you heard," said the Irish lad complacently. "But you'd better listen, all you sailor-men. Lieutenant-Commander Lang will have something to say if you don't give me your very best attention—"

Morgan reached with a long arm and caught him by the collar.

"Come here!" he said, jerking Donahue closer. "Is that the way you have been taught to speak to your betters? What do you mean?"

"Hi! Let up!" exclaimed Donahue. "By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland 'tis the truth I'm giving you! Seven Knott's just arrived in town. He's got forty-eight hours leave. He's just here to see his mother, and we're all to go back with him in the morning—no joke!"

"Oi, oi!" groaned Ikey Rosenmeyer.

His father was a fat, broad-featured man who almost wept whenever anybody told him he was an alien enemy because he had forgotten to take out his second naturalization papers. Nobody in Seacove, however, was now so patriotic as Mr. Rosenmeyer.

"Nefer you mind, Ikey," he said, putting his hand on the shoulder of his eldest son. "You maybe will catch you a German this time. Right oudt of a submarine boat—yes? Undt I make you up a fine lunch—for you and your friendts—to eat on the train."

"All right, papa," said Ikey. "But no dill pickles! I'm off them for life."

"Vell! it is blenty peoples likes 'em, Ikey," admonished his father. "Dill pickles makes us good pizness yet."

"Know what they call 'em in the navy, papa?" asked Ikey soberly.

"Vell, vot *do* they call 'em?"

"'Hun bananas,'" declared the son of the Rosenmeyers, with twinkling eyes.

"Oh, cracky!" ejaculated Torrance, and plunged out of the store.

"By St. Patrick's piper—"

"Never mind the rest, Frenchy," said George Belding. "Come along. We've got plenty to do if we have to go back to the *Colodia* with Boatswain Hans Hertig to-morrow."

Al Torrance had a long conference with Minnie Waggoner that evening. The English circus performer, her father, was still in a dazed state of mind. It was plain that it would be some time before he was capable of supporting his daughter and himself.

Torrance's father, however, had arranged with Mrs. Morgan to share the expense of keeping the Waggoners in Seacove. Mr. Torrance was a carpenter and builder in good circumstances, and he was glad to help anybody in whom his son showed such an unmistakable interest.

There was another bill to pay that came hard, however. The boys insisted upon paying Mr. Burgess for the injury done to the *Spray*. They would not leave that debt behind them when they went to sea.

The four original Navy Boys—Whistler, Torry, Frenchy and Ikey—each had a nest egg in the bank, the result of the capture of the German raider, the *Graf von Posen*. They drew on their savings bank accounts. George Belding had an account at his father's importing house in New York whereby he could get his share of the repair money.

Ikey wailed about it a little. That was only natural. "Paying for a dead horse" did not appeal to the son of the delicatessen shopkeeper.

"But anyway," he finally said aloud, "it isn't much to pay for Torry being saved from asphyxiation—hey, Whistler?"

"If you put it that way, it's cheap at the price," agreed Phil Morgan.

They came to this agreement on the train after the party, with Hans Hertig, their beloved "Seven Knott," had left Seacove the next day. They arrived at the Grand Central Terminal in New York in the early evening. The boys, not counting George, who lived there, had all been in New York before, at the time they originally joined the *Colodia's* crew.

This time the destroyer lay in the Hudson somewhere off Fifty-ninth Street, and they went uptown, instead of across to Brooklyn, to go aboard. George Belding took the lead; and he insisted on treating them all to a late supper, too,

at a restaurant with a cabaret on Columbus Circle, which the boys had read about but had never visited before.

"A little glimpse of the gay white way won't hurt us," grinned Al Torrance. "We can tell the other boys that we'll meet 'over there' what Broadway looks like."

"And maybe we won't get across again," said Donahue. "They say the war's all over now."

"That will be tough—if we don't get into active service again," cried Al Torrance. "Think! We won't get a chance to try to find Minnie's brother."

"Oi, oi!" croaked Ikey. "Listen to him!"

"His head's right full of girl," agreed Belding, with a smile. "I bet he can't box the compass without getting Minnie's name into it."

"All right, you fellows," said Torrance coolly. "I haven't got a pressed flower in the middle of my *Blue Jacket's Manual*, nor yet a girl's glove in the inside pocket of my shirt."

At this Belding and Morgan looked somewhat taken aback, while Ikey and Michael Donahue both doubled up with laughter. It looked as though Torry had the best of the joke. The fact that Phil Morgan and George Belding both carried mementoes of the girls far away in Bahia, Brazil, was well known to the younger boys, who delighted in teasing their older mates.

They went to the dock and caught the last launch for the *Colodia*, and as the party was accompanied by Boatswain Hertig they were passed by the Chief Master-at-Arms without question. The *Colodia* slipped down the river on the morning tide and off Fire Island joined a convoy of camouflaged deep-sea tramps bound for a certain port on the North Sea.

This was not a troop convoy; but the food and supplies which filled the holds of the slow-moving craft were as essential to America and the Allies as were troops. And there was considerable more danger from submarine attack than when the *Colodia* had served as guard for faster steamships.

Two days from land, and well out upon the northern route, the other destroyers turned back, leaving the *Colodia* the only fast craft with the convoy until they picked up the British guardships on the other side. There were two old cruisers in the string, but the destroyer could swim circles around them.

And, practically, that is what she did for the next four days—steam around and around the whole fleet, like a sheepdog guarding a flock of grazing ewes.

The northern route to Europe used by the Allied ships at that time was through the rough seas to the north and west of Ireland, thence

either outside the Hebrides or through the Minch, then rounding the northerly end of Scotland inside or outside the Orkneys as the case might be, and so down to the Scottish and English North Sea ports.

There were fewer chances of hitting mines sowed by the enemy on this route, or of being stopped by submarines, than on the course to the southward of the British Isles. Yet some of the German underseas-boats were believed to be working off the Irish coast, and it was whispered aboard the *Colodia* that there was a nest, or submarine base, on some rocky island in these northern seas.

The anxiety and interest of the boys on the destroyer connected with submarine chasing was just as highly developed now as it had been on the destroyer's first cruise. Lieutenant Commander Lang's offer of a double-eagle to the member of the crew that first sighted the periscope of a German submarine was still a standing offer, and there were bright eyes on the *Colodia*!

The boys watched the radio reports, too. Belding and Torrance had immediately taken up their study of radiotelegraphy in their off hours under "Sparks," the genial Chief Wireless Operator.

On the destroyer there were but two wireless



stations—the main deck-house room, where the operator usually sat, and a hidden room below that could be used if an enemy shell put the main instrument out of commission. On the huge superdreadnaught, the *Kennebunk*, on which the Navy Boys had spent some weeks, there were six instruments about the ship so that in a battle she was not likely to be put entirely out of communication with the other ships of the fleet.

Wireless work was becoming more and more important in the navy, and just as Philip Morgan gave his close attention to the big guns, aiming sometime to get a billet as gun-captain, George Belding was becoming proficient in radio-telegraphy. Nor was Al Torrance very far behind.

"That big brute of a station at Nauen has been sending, this watch," Belding said one afternoon, as he rejoined his friends on the deck. "It hammers at your ear-drums enough to deafen you."

"I got some of it yesterday," said Torrance. "It whines like a big dog with his paw caught under a door."

"And most of it is press stuff, in English, if you please," chuckled Belding. "They think they are doing wonders breaking down the morale of the Allies by sending out lying accounts of German raids on western front trenches where the Yankees cringe before their

attack.' You can imagine our boys 'cringing' before the Heinies."

"Well," Morgan observed thoughtfully, "tell a lie often enough, and not only will some of your listeners begin to believe it is the truth, but you'll get so you believe it yourself."

"Maybe you do if you are a Hun," sniffed Donahue.

"Well, they've got the biggest wireless station," said Ikey doubtfully. "That one at Nauen—"

"And there's another at Kiel," put in his Irish chum.

"Say, what's all this mean?" growled Belding, staring at the younger boys. "Boosting the Heinies, are you?"

"Giving the devil his due," grinned Michael Donahue. "The Germans have made the radio business what it is, haven't they?"

"Bah!" ejaculated Belding. "Just because they claim to have the biggest brute of a radio station in the world? I was talking to Sparks about it. He can tell you! The Germans have never invented a thing of importance, or made an important improvement connected with radiotelegraphy, any more than they have invented any other great thing which has been put forward in the war.

"Almost every nation on earth—even some

which we consider uncivilized—have contributed to the great inventions first developed in this war. But not Germans! The siege mortar, the airplane, the dirigible balloon, the submarine, the machine gun, the wireless, have been aided and improved very little by Germans. They are only refurbishers of other men's ideas.

"When you come down to the wireless, Sparks says," concluded the earnest Belding, "the Allies invented, developed, improved, and made it what it is. All that Germany ever contributed to the wireless instrument are the cunning little nickel-plated levers and micrometer adjustments."

"Oi, oi!" ejaculated Ikey.

"Is that so, George?" demanded Phil.

"Sparks says it is, positively."

"If Sparks says it's so, it's so," agreed Al Torrance. "But can you beat the Huns? They are the greatest blowers and bluffers in the world. Look at that huge outfit they have built at Nauen. They claim to send messages twelve thousand miles with it, and it's got a kick of fifteen hundred horsepower. But Sparks says a machine with five horse power behind it will send a message five thousand miles. There is no need of such a thundering, hammering machine as that at Nauen. If Germany hadn't more money than brains it never would have been built."

At the time this conversation took place the convoy had been met by several British destroyers. The ranking officer of this fleet radiotelegraphed Lieutenant Commander Lang his orders and the *Colodia* fell in behind the food and supply ships to watch for rear attacks and to keep after the stragglers.

It soon became noised about the destroyer that there was something new on foot. Code messages, Belding knew, were being picked out of the air. The boys were all assigned for drill to certain boats, and the five friends were together in one drill group.

Seven Knott called them to quarters and, with the rest of the support crew of this motor-sailing launch, ordered the boys to go over the gear and see that all was in place.

The gear of a boat of this character (an auxiliary-engine craft over twenty-six feet in length) includes all that carried by a pulling-boat of the same type, with additional gear as follows: Running lights, fog horn, whistle, fog bell, bucket of sand, and chemical extinguisher for putting out gasoline fires, fuel, tools for service of engine, besides the usual boat box in which are stowed ax, hatchet, saw, hammer, screw driver, chisel, screws, and nails, lead and line, tallow, candles, signal lantern, matches, fishing lines, hooks and sinkers, lamp wick, spun yarn, sail

twine, palm and sail needles, and a copy of "The Deck and Boat Book," which contains complete instructions in regard to boat equipment, drills, signals, and all other information about boats.

Phil Morgan said:

"They have these boats rigged and provisioned so that if you get off on a desert island you can set up housekeeping and live in peace and plenty till the old tin bucket comes back to pick you up."

On this occasion the boys noted, though they did not remark aloud upon it, that there were provisions and water put aboard for some days. They were all eagerness, believing that they were about to be assigned to boat duty of some special and significant kind.

## CHAPTER X

### THE LURE

BOATSWAIN HANS HERTIG, otherwise "Seven Knott," had full charge of getting the launch ready for the work assigned her. Three petty officers usually go with a boat of this size and character, especially if she ships a gun; and in this case a 3-inch rapid-fire gun was ordered made ready for lowering into the boat.

This work was not accomplished until dusk. Then the boat was lowered over the *Colodia's* rail into a rather placid sea, the destroyer's speed having been reduced to little better than a knot an hour—mere headway.

The piece was dismounted and lowered into the bow of the launch. There Phil Morgan, who was Number One in the boat, took charge of setting the three-inch gun in place upon the boat-mount. The carriage and limber were dismounted and stowed aft in the boat in the space where the reserve men would naturally be placed had they been ordered out on this occasion.

However, the boys soon learned that only the usual twenty-four men and three petty officers were to go on this cruise. As the evening thickened these men ("the support" such a crew is called) were called off and dropped down into the launch. She was to be pulled away at first, and no mast was stepped, nor was her motor used. To avoid noise the oars were likewise muffled.

"Some bone labor, eh?" muttered Torry in Phil's ear, as they pushed off from the destroyer's side. "What's up?"

"Silence!" rumbled Boatswain Hertig. "Stand by the oars!"

The destroyer slid away from the smaller boat as the falls were unhooked fore and aft. Then the boatswain again called:

"Shove off!"

"Out oars!"

"Give way together! That's it, boys—together!"

Number fifteen, the port stroke, and Number sixteen, the starboard stroke, bent their backs in unison. Numbers thirteen, fourteen; eleven, twelve; nine, ten; seven, eight; and five, six, took stroke from the two leaders. Morgan, with Torrance as Number four, and Ikey and Donahue, Numbers two and three, were arranged about the gun in the bows, with the first petty officer, Boatswain Hertig, while the remainder



of the support and the second and third petty officer were abaft the stroke oars. The second petty officer steered.

It was close quarters. But everything was so well stowed in the boat and the crew had been so well drilled that they did not mind it. They carried no light, only the flash and compass in the stern. The single lamp at the stern of the destroyer was likewise out of sight. The fleet and the British war craft were so far ahead that even if they showed lights that were not hooded the boys in the pulling boat could not have seen them.

Just what they were about to attempt puzzled the crew a good deal. But if there is anything more uncommunicative than a petty officer under sealed orders, the boys had never found it!

In a few minutes there were miles separating the boat from the destroyer—or, so the boys supposed. Not a lamp, not a signal rocket did they see. The steersman was keeping them on the course by the compass only. Just where they were going, and what they were expected to do, the seamen and the boys of the support had no idea.

Belding, who was port stroke, began to murmur:

“ ‘A-murderin’ we go,  
To meet the murd’rous foe.

If he's a Hun  
For a penny bun  
We'll shoot him in the toe!"

"Silence aft!" growled Seven Knott.

"Keep still, Fifteen!" warned the third petty officer beyond the gun's limber.

Suddenly a white rocket hurtled skyward, far, far to the northward. Every man who saw it sat up suddenly, tense with excitement. They had no idea what it meant; but it meant something!

Then came the reverberating bang, bang, bang of a broadside of heavy guns. A burst of colored lights near where the white rocket had ascended marked the scene of the sudden activity of the naval vessels.

The muttering roar and awful sea heave of the depth bombs followed. Far away from the scene as they were, the boat's crew from the *Colodia* felt the shock of the terrific explosions.

"Something doing!" ejaculated Michael Donahue.

Seven Knott, who was friend as well as mentor, reached across a ham-like hand and clapped it over the boy's mouth.

"Together, now! Pull!" he commanded in a deep growl.

They were not headed toward the scene of the excitement. Indeed, the boat was being

pulled west of north, and was getting farther and farther away from the course of the fleet.

There was small glimmer of light playing over the sea, for the sky was thickly overcast. Ahead there seemed to be a thick drop-curtain extending from the gently heaving surface of the sea to the sky. The prow of the rowed boat pushed slowly but steadily into this curtain of darkness.

"Pull, bullies!" muttered one of the oarsmen. "We don't belong to the new navy—this is old stuff!"

A growl from one of the petty officers silenced him, too. On and on they pulled into the night. The flurry of lights, guns, and depth-bomb explosions had ceased as suddenly as it was staged.

The watches were changed. That is, the twelve men at the oars were relieved by the twelve remaining members of the boat's crew. Two of the officers wrapped themselves in boat-cloaks and went to sleep on the thwarts. The men and boys who were relieved tried to catch cat naps, too. Such comfort as there is to be had in a boat they knew well how to secure.

It was four bells, or two in the morning, when Morgan and Torrance, pulling side by side the bow oars, suddenly saw a glow of light low down on the surface of the sea to starboard. It was a white glow and lasted perhaps ten seconds.

"Did you see that, Whistler?" muttered his chum.

"Was it a fish jumping?" suggested Phil doubtfully.

"You're a fish!" ejaculated the other, with frank disgust.

The petty officer at the helm shot a question at them: "What's the matter forward?"

"Light to starboard, sir. Almost abeam," answered Al promptly.

"What color light?" snapped the officer.

"White, sir."

"That's no signal then. Sure of your eyes?"

"I am quite sure there was a light—a white glow—close down on the sea," Torrance replied.

"And you, Morgan?"

"There was something," said Philip, more cautiously. "It did not seem like a boat-lantern, though."

Boatswain Hertig was astir now, and from his place in the bow behind the two Seacove chums asked for a further description of the phenomenon. After he had heard all the two oarsmen could tell, he said shortly:

"Fog out there. Around us, too. Thin. A flashlight might look hazy that way. Mr. Benson! flash your compass light in that direction."

The steersman did as he was told. But there was no reply from any direction.

"Burn a Coston," ordered Hertig. "Wake the men and tell them to get rifles ready. Bear a hand, now!"

Al Torrance still pulled evenly beside his chum; but out of the corner of his mouth nearest Morgan he whispered:

"Cracky! that light will give us away. Seven Knott has lost his head."

"I guess he knows what he's about."

"But if it's a sub——"

"I guess we are out here for the express purpose of giving ourselves away to the Hun."

"What's that?" gasped his friend.

"We're here to act as a lure for the Hun. We look like a boatload of castaways—from a mined ship, perhaps. Our gun is camouflaged. If we meet a sub we're going to be a mark, aren't we?"

"Oh, good-night!" murmured Al. "We'll have the same chance, then, as an icicle on a red-hot stove. Whew!"

Phil Morgan made no further reply; but secretly he felt just as Torry did. This boat from the *Colodia* merely was bait in the trap for the German submersibles.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ROCKY ISLE OF SLOE

THE Coston light burned steadily for two minutes. Its glare was pale green. It threw hump-backed shadows of the men pulling the oars against the fog which did, as the boatswain said, hang over the boat.

As it died there flashed out in the darkness abeam of the *Colodia's* boat another light, but of a different hue. It was an easy guess that this light was likewise burned in a small boat and that that boat was following almost the same course as their own.

Yet the tendency of the two was to come together. In an hour the boys heard low voices and the muffled creaking of oars. One of the petty officers got to his feet and hailed:

"Ahoy! Who are you?"

"Bli'me!" croaked a hoarse and unmistakably cockney voice, "that's no 'Un!"

Another voice said something that must have

been a code word, or some signal agreed upon.

"All right!" said the American officer.

"Ow yer makin' out, Yank?" came the irrepressible voice out of the mist.

"All right, Limey!" was the laughing rejoinder. "What's your ship?"

"H. M. S. *Cygnet*," was the quick reply. "And you?"

"*Colodia*," was the reply.

Already the two rowing boats had changed their courses slightly and were separating. Some of the American boys shouted:

"Good luck, Limey!"

"Hif the 'Un don't get ye, see ye in ——," and the cockney voice mentioned the name of the Scotch port to which Morgan and his chums knew the *Colodia* was bound.

It was very mysterious, take it all together. Of course the officers knew where the boats were going and why they were rowing about here; but the men and boys must be content to be confident that their immediate superiors had their wits about them.

There were no further signals exchanged. The *Colodia's* boat was pulled steadily on and on. The haze which surrounded them on the gently heaving sea turned gray at last. The petty officer at the helm watched his timepiece. It was nearing eight bells and a change of watch. But



Hans Hertig suddenly aroused again and stood up in the bow of the boat, steadying himself with a hand on the canvas-covered gun.

"Keep your places, men," he ordered. "Hold her just so, Mr. Benson. Steady all, till we get in. Hear that?"

What had roused him was a souging sound in the distance. They suspected immediately that it was a quiet surf sucking back and forth among the rocks. They were nearing land.

"Do you think we're going to attack some German stronghold, all by our lonesomes, Whistler?" whispered Torrance, keeping in stroke.

"Like enough. Maybe that other boat is near."

"One thing sure, those limejuicers are good fighters," returned Al. "If we get into a tight corner and there aren't enough of our boys to finish the job, it'll be kind of handy to have a bunch of those Limeys at our backs."

"You said it!" agreed Morgan, in a whisper.

The low tone the boatswain used in giving orders showed that he considered their situation precarious. They heard the dip of no oars beside their own. The oarlocks were still muffled. As the boat approached the rocks the sea made more sound than did the propulsion of the craft.

Gray was the mist about them, and gray was the shroud of the land—whatever piece of land it

was—that they neared. At first the boys who faced forward could not distinguish between the oilily heaving surface of the water and the out-lying rocks.

“Ah! there’s a streak of foam, boys,” muttered Belding, who crouched right behind the bow oarsmen.

But the wave did not burst in any thunderous sound. It was merely vexed by the ragged barrier of the rocks. The lift of a reef suddenly appeared at port—an out-thrust into the sea and fog.

A chance slap of an oarblade upon the water brought a flat echo on the instant. Morgan, who was observant, whispered to his oarsmate:

“The shore is rocky and high. That sound returned from a high cliff. Smack! Just like that.”

“It can’t be Ireland,” muttered Al Torrance. “I didn’t know there was any land out here.”

“Irish islands. Only Irish fishermen knew much about them before the war. Hide-outs for smugglers and the like in the old days.”

A hissing order from the chief petty officer stopped even this whispered interchange of remarks. The boat was swept in by the oars between two reefs. The helmsman must have known something about this landing, or he could not have made his objective so certainly.

The inlet was not deep. Scarcely was the stern of the boat hidden from the open sea by the claw-like capes when the bow grated upon the sands.

"In bows!" muttered Hans Hertig.

Then: "Way enough! Toss! Boat the oars!"

The craft shook through her whole length and lay jammed upon the sands. There was no surf in this sheltered place. The boys saw in the gray dawn rocks piled all about them. There was no sign of life on the shore.

An anchor was carried ashore and wedged into a crack. Then the boatswain muttered the order for all hands to land.

They were somewhat cramped after being so many hours in the boat. Some of them began to stamp to take the kinks out of their legs, but they were stopped on the instant.

"Be still," ordered Mr. Benson. "Don't even let your knees creak. No smoking. The smell of tobacco carries farther in a fog than in clear weather. And if you must talk, let it not be above a pig's whisper."

"We surely are in for something," said Belding, as the five apprentice seamen gathered in a group under the lee of a boulder.

"Oi, oi!" murmured Ikey faintly. "They're going to feed us to the Heinies, sure enough."

"Tough delicatessen for 'em," muttered Tor-

rance. "I know I wouldn't set well on any Hun's stomach."

"Maybe they'll shoot you first," suggested Donahue, coolly.

"They tell me these submarine Heinies only eat live ones."

"Shut up, you fellows," warned Morgan. "Officer Benson is watching his turnip. There is something doing, I believe."

"Where do we go from here?" asked Belding.

"'Tention!" exclaimed the petty officer finally, snapping his watch case.

The five chums scrambled up with the others and stood in a ragged line along the narrow beach. Mr. Benson whispered rather than spoke aloud:

"Follow your leader. Have rifles ready. If there is a shot fired ahead, double quick forward. Otherwise, as silent as you can be, and no talking under any circumstances."

He moved out ahead of the line. The boys came last, of course, with Seven Knott—although in command of the beach party—bringing up the rear. It looked as though Mr. Benson must have some knowledge of the place.

Phil Morgan remembered that Benson was Irish. This place on which they had landed was, of course, an islet off the coast of Ireland. There are many such rocky isles scattered about this

part of the North Atlantic, the Seacove boy knew.

The path they followed, if it could be called such, was a difficult way up the face of the broken cliff. The mist was thinning, but as they had landed on the western shore of the islet, the sun was not yet visible to their eyes.

Their agility and the fact that they wore deck shoes enabled the party to get over the rocks without undue noise. The petty officer led the expedition straight through a gully that sliced the edge of the cliff and seemed to be a gash cut right through the island. In no place were they obliged to show themselves above the edge of the natural walls between which they passed.

By and by, and just as the red edge of the sun appeared far across the sea to the eastward, Benson halted in a little hollow. Hans Hertig went up to the edge of the crater and lay down to peer over at the sea and rocks below. The hollow was large enough for the whole crew to gather around Benson.

"This is the Island of Sloe, my lads," he whispered. "Just over that ridge where the boatswain is peering is an almost land-locked cove. There are caverns in the cliff at the sea-level, and the cove is anchorage for a super-dreadnaught.

"Somebody got the idea that Sloe Island has been made a submarine base by the Heinies. That

is what has brought us here. And probably there are two other boat-crews near the island right now.

"The plan was made by wireless when the British ships met the fleet. If we catch the Heinies here we hope to hold them until the destroyers can race in and capture the whole plant, submarines and all.

"But of course, if we are caught and overpowered, the Huns will never trouble to take us to Germany. You understand that?"

The sparkling eyes and delighted grins that met his enquiring gaze satisfied the petty officer.

"I see," he added. "If you feel that way about it—"

A fight was in prospect, and a fight in which quarter would neither be asked nor given.

"How we've all longed for just one crack at the Huns, and now our chance has come!" whispered Frenchy.

The men and boys squatted about the hollow, rifles across their knees. They were denied the comfort of tobacco, those who wanted it, but the second petty officer opened a big bundle he had brought from the boat, and it proved to be sandwiches made up in the destroyer's galley the night before. Every man had his canteen of water.

There was a second bundle, too. This the

third officer had brought and was very careful of. He now opened it, displaying half a dozen hand-grenades.

"Cracky!" sighed Torrance, his eyes dancing, "if they were only depth-bombs we could blow up the whole island."

"Sure," agreed Morgan, likewise in a whisper. "And with us on it, I suppose?"

The fog was being caught away by the rising breeze in torn whisps, which quickly melted as the sun rose from the sea. Boatswain Hertig looked around and beckoned to Mate Benson to join him.

They peered over the edge of the crater-like hollow, and as the fog was dissipated beheld clearly what lay at the foot of the cliff. The boys saw that the two officers talked together earnestly. When Benson came back he looked worried.

"Wish we could bring that three-inch gun up here," he said to the third officer. "But it is too heavy and the way is too rough. But if we could set her up right there where the boatswain lies, her muzzle could be depressed and we'd pepper anything in the cove. Believe me, it would be a cinch!"

"What's down there to pepper?"

"Well, there's at least one sub. She lies there with her hatch open. There are several small boats on the beach. This is a nest all right."



"Cracky!" murmured Torrance, hearing this, in his chum's ear. "With the hatch open? Suppose a fellow could throw one of those grenades down that hatchway?"

Phil sat up with an ejaculation that attracted Mr. Benson's attention.

"What's the matter?" he demanded. "You boys want to be careful about speaking loud."

"That's a bully idea, Torry!" Morgan said. Then he explained to the officer. "What do you think, sir?"

"Oh," the latter replied, "the submarine is too far away from this spot for a grenade to be thrown."

"Does she lie so far off shore?" Belding asked, with interest.

"No. But from here—hold on, boys!" exclaimed Benson, suddenly. "I believe I know where one might stand and toss one of those hand-grenades into that open hatch. It would be great!"

"Let Whistler try it, sir," whispered Torrance. "He can pitch a ball better than any other fellow on the *Colodia*. Let Whistler try it!"

## CHAPTER XII

### THE ATTACK

"AND Whistler will blow the sub sky-high!" gasped Michael Donahue. "By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland!"

"Sh! Easy!" admonished the petty officer. "A grenade exploded inside that submarine would like enough ball up the machinery by which the ship is steered, in any case, if it didn't do more. It would be a mighty fine thing."

"Can we get to that ledge you speak of without being observed from below?" asked Morgan, deeply interested now.

"I believe so. I've been on this island before—long ago, before ever I went to America, a greenhorn," said Benson. "I've got a good map of it in my head. If we can get to that ledge with the bombs—"

"Let's try it, sir!" Belding exclaimed.

"Give Whistler the chance to fling a grenade," repeated Torrance. "He'll turn the trick."

"Come on, Morgan," said Mr. Benson. "Let's speak to the boatswain about it."

The petty officer was quite as much excited as the boys themselves. Indeed, the whole party was interested now. Phil and Mr. Benson crept up the side of the hollow and joined Hans Hertig. The boatswain was a man who did not talk much; but he had the full confidence of Lieutenant Commander Lang and the other officers on the *Colodia*. Otherwise he would not have been entrusted to lead this attacking party.

He was now looking through his glasses at what went on below. The fog was fast melting out of the cove, and Phil Morgan saw, when he looked down, that most of the rocky shore as well as the reef-enclosed basin was visible from this height.

"Vell?" said Seven Knott, without changing his position.

Benson explained rapidly the thing which Torrance had suggested, although he gave the credit to Phil Morgan. At any rate he, as well as the boys, knew that Phil could throw a grenade, as well as a baseball, farther and more accurately than most.

"Can you get down there without them fellers piping you off?" demanded the boatswain.

Benson assured him that it could be done. "There is a path down a gash in the cliff—like that we came up from the other beach of the island."

"'Tis a shame we can't get the little three-inch gun up here by that same path," grumbled Seven Knott. "But that can't be. Vell, you take the boy—and maybe another one—down there to the place you know of. Remember we have only half an hour now till the time set. If them other boats didn't get here—"

"I bet they are here, Boatswain," said Benson confidently.

"Unless they were picked up by some sub in the night. We want to be sure we don't shoot no prisoners," growled the other. "Vell, you go."

He turned to give Morgan a single look.

"You take goot care of yourself, Whistler," he said, in addition.

"Come on," whispered Benson. "Move fast."

Morgan kept right with him, and whispered: "Take Torrance, Mr. Benson. He's a good kid."

The petty officer nodded. He beckoned to Phil's chum and ordered him to pick up three of the bombs and come along. Morgan carried his own and Torry's rifles. Benson led the way back from the edge of the cliff, and after a brisk walk of five minutes brought them to the head of a narrow defile that led down to the eastern beach of the island.

The rocks sheltered them from any observation by those below. But Benson warned them in

whispers to step lightly and make no noise. He took one of the rifles from Morgan, as he had only his side arms.

The cliff at this point must have been a hundred feet high. It was no easy path they descended, and yet it was well defined. Now and then they obtained a sight of the sea outside the basin; but not until they had descended to within a few yards of the foot of the rock was the submarine visible.

There it lay, easily within stone's throw of the cliff—a sullen gray shape, scarcely heaving on the groundswell. The round hatch was hoisted back on its hinges. There was a low rail about the conning tower. A good-sized gun was mounted at either end of the deck. One man sat on the rail, nodding. He was evidently the only guard.

Torrance whispered in his chum's ear:

"Suppose the rest are all below, Whistler? They'll be drowned if we sink the sub."

Morgan's face was grim, but he only nodded. Benson darted Torrance a stern glance and the latter fell silent.

Suddenly the three halted. The sound of a person coughing was near at hand. They were still thirty feet or more above the beach. There must be a sentinel on the ledge.

Benson stole forward cautiously, his rifle ad-

vanced. But Morgan, right behind him, clubbed his gun. He realized that a rifle shot would ruin the surprise-attack which had been planned.

They peered carefully around an out-thrust boulder. Back to them, and gazing seaward, was a sailor in the uniform of the German navy. He leaned on a rifle, and his belt bristled with bayonet, knife, and automatic pistol.

In front of the sentinel was a natural barrier of rock that would completely hide him from below if he sat down. The path wound down the wall from this shelf, quite hidden from the beach.

Benson looked back and saw Phil Morgan with his rifle clubbed. The petty officer shook his head, standing his rifle carefully meanwhile against the boulder. Then with a significant look at Phil, he nodded, and began to creep forward upon the unconscious guard.

Morgan and Torrance understood. The petty officer expected the former youth to stand in readiness to beat down the German only if he, Benson, was unable to conquer the man.

The latter remained quite as sleepily inattentive to his surroundings as the sentinel on the submarine had appeared from the top of the cliff when Morgan had looked over. The time was about mid-watch, four bells, and the sentinels would probably soon be changed. Although the sun was up now, there was no stir in the submarine nest.

Benson, creeping forward on the balls of his feet, reached a spot directly behind the unsuspecting guard. Suddenly the latter started. Something had awakened his attention; yet he did not look around.

Benson's clutching hands grabbed the German by the neck. His calloused fingers sunk into the fellow's windpipe and jugular vein. He jerked the guard backward.

His rifle would have fallen to the rock with some noise had not Phil Morgan leaped to secure it. Benson bore the German backward to the rock, shifted his clutching hands, and held the man down with a knee pressed upon his chest.

The fellow glared wildly up at the Americans. Not alone was he held breathless, but their appearance plainly amazed the German. Morgan and Torrance both appreciated the fact that the Germans on the island did not fear any attack.

"Quick! Gag him!" commanded Benson.

Torrance put down the hand-grenades and fell upon the German's legs. He drew strong twine from his pocket—seizing, as it is called—and proceeded to bind the prisoner's ankles firmly.

Morgan crammed a ball of handkerchief into the German's mouth. They then turned him over on his face and lashed his wrists behind him. Later they made the gag more secure.

It all occupied but two minutes. If nobody



had seen him pulled back by Benson, it was all right. Morgan peered carefully over the stone barrier at the outer edge of the ledge on which they stood. There was nobody in sight on the beach and the man on the deck of the submarine had not moved.

"Can you throw a bomb from here?" Torrance asked excitedly.

"I believe so. I can hit the sub, all right," returned Morgan.

"Exploding it outside the sub won't amount to much. You want to get it inside before it goes off," the petty officer observed. "Let's see what time it is."

He looked at his watch and the boys looked at theirs.

"We're right on the tick," Torrance whispered.

"Thirteen minutes to the time set," murmured Benson. "I wonder if those Britishers have landed and are in position?"

"Where would they be?" Phil asked.

"On the other side of the cove, I believe. One boat's crew will not land until after we attack. They will guard the seaward opening of this anchorage. Got a three-inch gun like ours."

"Will there be a signal to fire?" Torrance asked.

"Seven Knott will try to pick off that sentinel aboard the sub., I reckon," said Benson, smiling.

"I think that's what is in his mind. And he's a good shot. Then we hold our fire till the Germans come swarming out of the caves or out of the sub., as the case may be. I believe the crew of that shark is ashore. There is no comfort sleeping in a U-boat."

"You're right, Mr. Benson," said Morgan feelingly. He had had experience.

The trio of Americans and their prisoner were wholly sheltered from observation. Benson sent Torry to the head of the lower path to watch for the approach of any of the enemy. Morgan took off his reefer and rolled up his right shirt sleeve. He handled the grenades judiciously.

These were the new form of bombs. There was a pin to be removed just before the bomb was thrown. It took judgment and coolness to place the explosive in just the right place at the moment it burst.

Phil Morgan had had considerable practice in throwing hand-grenades as well as baseballs. He peered now over the stone barrier and gauged the open hatchway. The hole was three feet across. He was quite sure he could place the bomb at that distance within a circle of three feet in diameter.

The minutes slipped by. Benson's watch was in his hand. Suddenly he snapped it shut and replaced it in his pocket.

"Ready, Morgan!" he whispered.

Phil crouched, ready to stand erect at the word, the first bomb in his hand. From above their heads there came the startling explosion of a rifle. Even as the petty officer cried "Now!" and Morgan rose to his full height, he saw the dozing sentinel on the deck of the submarine crumple and roll to the steel plates, dropping his rifle, and from thence slide into the quiet water.

Morgan swung back his arm, and, with the overhand throw, tossed the grenade, from which he had pulled the pin, toward the gaping hatchway of the German U-boat.

## CHAPTER XIII

### GIVE AND TAKE

THE sun had risen high enough now for its rays to shine directly into Phil Morgan's eyes as he stood upon the ledge above the beach and swung the hand-grenade at the open hatchway of the submarine.

Nevertheless, his aim was true. The bomb dropped exactly into the gaping hole.

For thirty seconds following the rifle shot from the top of the cliff that rolled the sentinel off the U-boat's deck into the water not a sound save the shrieking of wild fowl and the murmur of the surf penetrated the morning stillness. Then a muffled explosion—that of the thrown grenade—wracked the silence of the Island of Sloe. A balloon of black smoke belched from the hatchway of the submarine.

There followed shouts from the beach of the sheltered basin, and armed men swarmed out upon the rock-strewn sands. They came from the base of the cliff—from the entrances to the

caverns that Benson knew honeycombed the rock.

"Here they come!" the petty officer cried. "Ready with your gun, Torrance," and he seized Morgan's rifle. "Now, Whistler! Another grenade just where you put that first one, my lad!"

Morgan had already seized a second grenade and pulled the pin. His arm swung back as before. The grenade flew towards his objective, but before it reached the submarine a second and far greater explosion rocked the whole island. The deckplates of the submarine were ripped apart, the conning tower blew off, and the guns mounted fore and aft were driven off their mountings.

The great submersible buckled in the middle, rising twenty feet above the sea, and then, amid smoke and flames, sank out of sight. The destruction of the craft was complete, and the Germans had lost one of their newest boats.

As the echoes died away the confused and frightened cries from below rose to the pitch of a terrified scream. Then came the volley of rifle shots from the *Colodia's* boat crew at the top of the cliff. From across the basin came a double volley of rifle shots which swept the beach before the caverns like hail. Only the fact that the beach was littered with big boulders saved any of the Germans from that murderous fire.

Torrance had fired down into the crowd with terrible effect. Benson likewise joined in the attack with the other rifle. Morgan seized a third bomb, pulled the pin, and tossed the explosive with deadly precision into a bunch of confused Germans below the ledge on which he and his companions stood.

This was the final touch. In spite of the orders of their officers, the German marines and seamen ran. They rushed back into the shelter of the caverns, dragging such of their wounded with them as could easily be seized.

Across the basin came a hearty cheer and a crowd of British seamen broke shelter and charged along the littered beach toward the caves, while at the narrow entrance to the cove, or anchorage, appeared a launch, rowed by other sailors in the uniform of the British navy.

In the bow of this boat was a gun, and under the propulsion of a dozen pairs of sturdy arms the launch dashed forward to get into range of the cavern mouths.

The attack was a complete surprise. There was no doubt of that. Down the path behind Benson and his two companions came half of the crew of the American launch under the command of the third petty officer. Hans Hertig, the boatswain, remained above with the reserve party.

But Benson blocked the descent of anybody to

the lower path. He even held back the excited Torrance and Morgan.

"Hold hard!" he said. "That beach is open to the Huns. But the caves will be closed to us, unless the Huns are completely out of hand. And that I don't believe."

He was right. The British landing party came on, cheering. They arrived within thirty yards of the caverns. Then there blazed forth from those shelters the fire of three machine guns, as well as a volley of bullets from the rifles of all who could crowd to the entrances to the caves.

Nobody could accuse the British seamen and marines of lack of courage. Their officers had to yell again and again to their men to take to shelter. But soon all who had not been badly hit were crouching behind boulders and the rattle of the machine guns ceased.

Benson and the other petty officer in charge of the Americans on the cliff path conferred together earnestly. To take their party down to the beach would be only to expose them to a murderous fire from the caves. They would lose much to gain nothing, for it was evident that the Germans were too well sheltered to be rushed by any party of attackers.

The attack would be practically a failure after all, unless the gun in the second British boat could



be brought to bear upon the entrance to the caves.

"And I don't know that one gun will shut up those Heinies," growled Mr. Benson. "If we had our boat around here with our gun to help—"

"That is what Boatswain Hertig will want to do if the fight isn't over pretty soon. The destroyers can't get here till noon, or thereabouts; but another Hun U-boat is likely to show up at any time," said the other petty officer with the *Colodia's* men.

The men and boys on the cliff path and ledge did not like to be idle. They began to growl objections at the delay. The British on the beach kept up a scattering fire, evidently pot-shooting at every German head they glimpsed.

Meanwhile the second boat from the British destroyer came rapidly across the cove. An officer stood in the bow. He was a sub-lieutenant, and was the ranking officer of the expedition. He would be Seven Knott's superior if the American and British parties combined for action.

Suddenly a rattle of guns broke out again from below. The cap flew from the head of the officer standing beside the gun in the bow of the British launch. But he gave the matter not the slightest attention. They saw him wave his hand and give the order to his gunners to fire.

In quick succession three shells were fired from the boat gun; but the shrapnel merely rattled on

the rocks. For several minutes the Germans did not reply, their rifle fire even being silenced.

Then, seeing that little of the shrapnel entered the caves, the machine guns began to chatter once more. One boat gun could not silence the German battery. The fire grew more intense. The men in the boat on the open water were much more easily hit than those behind the rocks on the shore. Several were wounded, and three were killed outright.

Meanwhile the American seamen and apprentices were growing more and more impatient. It looked to them as though they were being held back by their officers in a most cowardly way, while the British were bearing the brunt of the battle.

"Let us get down there, Mr. Benson!" growled one old-timer. "Think we want to stand here till we take root on this rock? Those chaps are having all the fun."

"You crazy bug!" ejaculated Benson. "Those Heinies have like enough got one of those machine guns trained on the very foot of this path."

"You only guess that," said the man.

"I'll let you go down and try it," said the boatswain's mate in exasperation. "After you have stopped lead as many times as I have you won't be so anxious to get in the way of it!"

"Aw, you needn't think you are the only petty

officer that knows anything in this man's navy," grumbled the man in an undertone.

Benson caught the words, and he was angry. "Say!" he cried, "do you volunteer to go down and try it?"

"Surest thing you know!" exclaimed the reckless fellow.

"Go to it, then!" snapped Benson, stepping back.

The seaman, rifle in hand, went down the path. The others were eager to follow him, but Benson waved them back. For his own part he followed close at the reckless one's heels.

When they turned into the lower stretch of the path which opened upon the beach a perfect rain of bullets swept the spot. One machine gun had been held all the time on the range of this path.

Benson was wounded slightly in the arm himself; but had he not caught the other man by the collar of his shirt and dragged him back, the fellow would have crumpled down on the sand and been a mark for some German sharpshooter.

As it was, the reckless one bore three wounds—one quite serious in his thigh. The petty officer dragged him back, groaning, to the ledge. To descend and attack the caves was to court death—nothing less.

The wounded man stifled his groans when he was bandaged, and declared:

"Dog-gone! I might have knowed Benson knew more about it than me."

They had laid him in a sheltered place on the ledge from which Morgan had thrown the bomb down the hatchway of the submarine. Ikey Rosenmeyer ran back up the path for a hammock that had been brought along from the boat for just such an emergency as this. They could swing the wounded man in it and carry him across the island to the boat.

When Ikey came flying down the path again he was almost breathless with excitement.

"Look! Look!" he cried pointing seaward. "Seven Knott saw it first through his glass, and Frenchy's been wigwagging to the Limeys in the boat. Those Britishers out there are going to be caught in bad shape if they don't look out. Oi, oi! But this is getting exciting.

"There it is! You can see it," repeated Ikey, pointing again. "Another submarine. You can see her conning tower. On the surface and steering straight for the breach yonder. Oi, oi!"

The others now began to be excited.

"Why don't the Limeys pull for the breach?"

"What good would that do?" demanded Torrance. "They can't escape. That sub. will have two guns mounted. Say! they may be able to shell us away from the edge of the cliff up yonder."

"They can't hit us behind this rock-wall," said Ikey. "Can they, Mr. Benson?"

"I reckon exploding shells just above us would splinter the rock so that we would stand a good chance of getting hurt," explained the petty officer, in some worriment.

"Maybe she is not German," Torrance said doubtfully.

"She is not likely to be an Allied submarine," Mr. Benson declared. "Most of those are prowling about the channel and up and down the North Sea coasts."

"Those Limeys have got to take to the shore and abandon boat," growled one of the older seamen.

But the British launch was not headed for the nearer shore. The officer who commanded her was a fighting man. No doubt of that! His crew of seamen was pulling straight across the cove toward the entrance.

"Cracky!" ejaculated Al Torrance, "he's going to fight it out."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FORTUNES OF WAR

"AND we are stuck here!" muttered one of the American seamen in utter disgust. "Say, Mr. Benson, those Britishers will have the laugh on us."

"More than that," muttered the petty officer. "They will think we are scamping our job. We ought to be in this—and we're not."

"What's the matter with Seven Knott, do you suppose?" whispered Torrance to Morgan and Belding.

"Too bad we could not have mounted our gun up yonder," sighed the last named youth.

"If the guns on this coming submarine are as big as the ones on the sub. that was sunk, they could shell our gun out of its emplacement, even if we could have brought it to the edge of the cliff," Phil said thoughtfully.

"Cracky!" ejaculated Torrance, as an after-thought, "we have done something that counts already. Didn't Whistler sink the sub.?"

"You are right, lad," said Mr. Benson. "But our British friends have got some real hand-to-hand work before them now."

The British boat was being rowed straight for the entrance of the basin. It was soon out of shot of the machine guns at the caves, but, as the boys remarked, a far greater danger was approaching. The submarine could now be easily seen.

She was approaching at good speed. They could see moving figures on her deck. Without doubt they were manning the gun mounted forward of the turret.

It was Morgan who turned earnestly to the petty officer. "Mr. Benson, you know so much about this Sloe Island, isn't there any other path down the face of these cliffs but this one we're on?"

"I don't know of any," acknowledged Benson.

Immediately there was a scrambling in the rocky defile behind them, and Michael Donahue appeared in a state of great excitement.

"Oh, fellers! I—I mean, Mr. Benson! The boatswain's sent a message by me. He says leave enough men to hold this path if the Germans attack, and bring all the rest to the top of the cliff and join him and the other boys."

"What's he want?" asked Benson, scrambling to his feet.



"Just told me to say that, sir."

"Here! Torrance, Briggs, McCain. Two men could hold a hundred off on this narrow path, but I'll leave three. You are in charge, Torrance. All got full belts?"

He was assured they had. The third petty officer was assigned two men to carry the wounded fellow across the island to the boat.

"Better stay there and guard it, too," said Mr. Benson. "If any of the Heinies appear, fire the three-inch. We're sure to hear that. 'Tention! Ready, boys?"

They lined up for the climb. Torrance saw his chums depart with some sorrow.

"Never mind!" whispered Frenchy, with a wicked grin. "If we find you've gone west when we come back, we'll send the medal they give you to Minnie."

Three left to guard this path and four going back to the boat, reduced the party from the *Colodia* to twenty, including Boatswain Hertig and Mate Benson. When the climbing party reached the hollow just back of the edge of the cliff where they had left the reserve, they found that Hertig had sent out explorers along the cliff and one of these had found a practicable path down to the beach—a path that Benson knew nothing about.

The party lined up far enough back from the verge of the cliff to be well out of view of the

keenest glass that might be turned on the island from the approaching submarine. That steel shark was nearing the island at a speed of twelve or thirteen knots an hour. The launch from the British destroyer was already at the breach, her gun probably manned and ready to attack the submersible. The officer in command—that tall, brave figure—was taking a desperate chance.

“Ready, boys?” snapped Mr. Benson as Boat-swain Hertig stepped out in the lead, with the man who had found the second path to the beach beside him. “Double-quick—march!”

The Americans fairly raced across the island to the spot indicated. When they arrived at the beginning of the path they found it to be a rough and perilous one, indeed. But it looked as though it led straight down to the beach. If there was going to be a general battle down there they wished heartily to be in it.

Down the rocks they scrambled, Hertig in the lead. They let each other down over sheer places, sometimes sliding for two feet before reaching a secure foothold.

“Too bad we haven’t got Isa Bopp in this party,” muttered Donahue. “He’s so tall and lathy we could use him for a ladder.”

“Can the jokes, Frenchy,” begged Ikey Rosenmeyer. “Ain’t this a serious occasion? You ain’t got no reverence for nothing.”

"And you've no grammar," chuckled the Irish lad. "By St. Patrick's piper—"

"Silence!" commanded the boatswain from below.

Nobody less agile than these sailors could have descended the cliff at this point. And when they were about half way down it looked as though they had got into a pocket and could neither return nor go forward. The drop to the beach from this place was a sheer forty feet or more.

They stood in a hollow in the rock and peered down. Benson sputtered because they had not thought to send back to the boat for a coil of rope.

But out of this pocket led two narrow channels, open to the sky, it seemed, but apparently cut deep into the cliff by the hand of nature. But one man at a time could enter either of these passages.

The man who had first found this possible path to the beach said he believed the best way was to follow the left hand channel. They entered this in single file and without exploring the right hand cut at all. But Morgan whispered to Belding:

"I wonder where that other passage leads? It starts right back toward those caves. Suppose—?"

"Do you believe the cliff is honeycombed by caves and passages?"

"So Mr. Benson said."

"Then the Germans might get out of their holes in a dozen places," muttered Belding. "I wonder if Seven Knott has thought of that?"

But the boatswain was at the head of the column, and they could not discuss that point with him at the moment.

The passage through the rock came out upon another ledge on the face of the cliff. From here it was possible to descend lower. From ledge to ledge they lowered themselves. At certain points it was precarious enough, and it was plain that they would never be able to return to the top by the way they had descended.

At last they stood on the beach. They were behind a spur of the cliff that hid them from the position of the British shore party; nor could they see what was going on at the entrance of the cove.

Occasionally rifle fire near by assured them that the former party was keeping the Germans in their holes. Suddenly they heard the distant report of a big gun.

"That's the German sub.!" cried one of the petty officers.

"The fun's begun, then," was the general rejoinder.

Following the report came another and nearer explosion. The boatswain led his party out of the shelter of the cliff's base to the more open beach. They saw across the bay a number of fig-

ures, as lively as ants, running about the rocks on one side of the cove's entrance.

"Oh, boy!" ejaculated an American seaman, "those Limeys are quick workers. They've got their gun ashore and remounted it. That was their game, eh?"

Again the piece set up on the rocky shore spoke. The spectators could see the shell burst almost in the bows of the swiftly approaching submarine. A chance shot might put the under-seas craft out of commission.

The reason that the British officer and his men had landed their gun was self-evident. They could better serve their piece on shore, and there was less danger of a shell from the submarine knocking the three-inch gun into scrap-iron.

The Americans were not going to reinforce the boat's crew at the breach, however. They went on the double-quick toward the place where the other crowd of British seamen were spread out on the sands behind boulders, watching the entrance to the caverns.

As they ran, there came a burst of machine-gun fire from the caves and the whine of the bullets overhead made some of the younger boys duck.

"Don't mind the bees buzzing, Ikey!" sang out one of the older lads.

"Ikey knows they've got stingers," chuckled Donahue. "Wow!"

A splinter knocked off a boulder had torn through his shirt at the shoulder and creased his arm. It brought blood, but the Irish lad did not stop for an instant.

"I'll get me a Heinie to pay for that," he declared.

"Flat down, boys!" ordered Mr. Benson. "Select a place that will hide you from the water as well as from the caves. If that submarine gets inside the basin she will give us kildee!"

The greeting of the British seamen was jovial enough, but in a minute they were all serious again. They had lost three of their group outright and several had been wounded. Besides, the watch they kept upon the party at the harbor's mouth showed that the fortunes of war seemed not to be favoring them. The German submarine kept straight on her course for the island anchorage. She would soon be near enough to shell this other group, and the Americans into the bargain, and drive them off the beach before the cave entrances.

## CHAPTER XV

### MOPPING UP

"It was a big mistake that we did not land all our guns," Benson, the boatswain's mate, observed to the British petty officer.

"Think so, matey?"

"With three of 'em—oh, well—we could have shown 'em something."

"I don't know about that," was the rejoinder. "Maybe Mr. Martin will be sorry he landed his piece. It looks as if the Huns would get it in a minute."

"Martin? That is the name of your officer?"

"Yes, matey. A mighty fine officer he is, too. The men would follow him anywhere. And he's a reg'lar toff, at that. Hi! looks as if he was in a bad box out there."

The submarine's two guns were now throwing shells at the party on the point. One finally flew clear over the rocks and burst in the pool behind.

"And there isn't a thing we can do to help." growled Seven Knott suddenly. "Vell!"

"We ought to be able to keep any party from



landing from the submarine," said Belding in Phil Morgan's ear. "What do you think?"

"There may be a chance of our doing that. Altogether our three shore parties must still number sixty men. And sixty men ought to do something. But those Germans in caves will spill out to help."

"We ought to rush 'em and mop them up," said Belding earnestly.

"Tell that to Seven Knott."

But after all Phil Morgan was thinking seriously about the situation. Belding's suggestion was inspired.

While the attention of all was focused on the battle at the breach the Germans in the cave might never suspect a rear approach. If there should be any way of getting into the caves at the rear—

Morgan crawled over to where Seven Knott was lying with his binoculars fixed on the end of the point where the British officer and his men had set up their gun. The boatswain glanced for a moment at his young friend and fellow-townsmen, and grinned.

"Vell?" he drawled.

"Listen, Boatswain," said the boy eagerly. "Suppose we could get into the caves from the back, surprise the Heinies, and mop 'em up? What?"

"How you do that?" demanded the other quickly.

"Remember that pocket up there on the cliff? Where we thought we were stumped and couldn't get down to the beach?"

"Vell?"

"There were two passages out of the pocket. Remember?"

The boatswain's eyes glowed suddenly and he licked his lips. "Vell, you know where dot other passage go, heh?"

"No. But I'd like to find out," said Morgan eagerly.

"All right, Whistler. We find oudt," replied Hans Hertig, nodding his big head.

He went immediately to Benson and the British petty officer. His brief explanation of Phil Morgan's suggestion was accepted as probable by the two under-officers.

It was agreed that ten men—five Americans and five British—should accompany the boatswain on this expedition. Phil Morgan begged that Belding be allowed to go, and he was included. But Ikey and Frenchy Donahue were considered too young to be allowed to take part in the affair.

With caution, that the Germans at the caves might not see them, the ten men under Hans Hertig crept back to the sheltered spot at the foot

of the cliff where they had previously descended.

To climb to the pocket of which Morgan spoke was not an easy task, but was possible. Had they wished to reach the heights in this direction, it would have been a more serious matter. Difficulties they had noted coming down might have thwarted any attempt to climb the entire distance.

However, they secured footing from ledge to ledge of the rock, and at length reached the place indicated. Here the second passage led deep into the rock, and Hans Hertig headed into it, with the men and boys at his heels.

Morgan was right at the boatswain's shoulder and when the channel in the rock became roofed over and darkness descended upon them Morgan drew forth a flashlight and thrust it forward that their leader might see what lay ahead.

"Good boy, Whistler!" whispered the boatswain. "Never thought it would be dark."

The passage was a winding subterranean tunnel, and before long it began to pitch downward. At some ancient date a water course must have found its way through this passage.

With as little noise as possible they crept along the dark way, Morgan now and then flashing his lamp. They scarcely whispered, for it might be that the subterranean passage acted as a whispering gallery. They had all heard of such places.

The tunnel wound down and down. From its beginning in the open air, forty feet or more above the beach, it corkscrewed its way downward until finally the party were sure they must have descended again to the beach-level. Of a sudden muffled sounds reached their ears—sounds which increased in strength as they advanced.

They were explosions—the reports of gunfire at the mouths of the caverns. The Germans were busy once more. Perhaps the submarine had entered the cove, having dismounted the British gun and driven off Lieutenant Martin and his crew.

Again and again the reports of the guns reverberated through the darkness, growing louder as the party progressed, until finally the crashing echoes became actually painful—threatening to burst their eardrums. Morgan produced some absorbent cotton from his kit and passed it around, so that all might stuff their ears.

During one of the intermissions, one of the men whispered:

“Oh, boy, some fight! And us not in it!”

“Must be an awful riot out there,” agreed another.

“No, no!” said George Belding. “I do not believe they are shooting any more than they were when we lay on the beach.”

“What’s eating you, boy?” exclaimed the first

speaker. "Don't you hear all that shooting?"

"If the shots are fired inside the cave, there are a million echoes for every shot," explained George laughing.

Suddenly, as they crept forward again, an admonitory "Hist!" came from the lips of the big boatswain.

The echoes of the gunfire had died away for the moment. But there came another sound—a rumbling noise that rose and fell in a most peculiar manner.

"Golly!" muttered one of the British sailors, "I never did like the dark."

"Sh!" warned Belding. "Let's listen!"

But listening to the peculiar sound did not bring forth any explanation. And Hans Hertig still halted in the tunnel. It was evident that the noise puzzled and troubled him.

"Sounds like the roaring of some animal," Belding whispered, at last.

"Vell," murmured the boatswain, and with evident relief. "It's may be a sea-lion yet? Huh?"

Phil Morgan crept under his arm and shot his flashlight ray ahead. There was a turn in the tunnel just before them. They had no means of knowing what lay beyond that turn.

"Forward!" muttered the boatswain, his pistol raised.

He and Morgan could barely walk side by side.

They came to the turn. The rumbling sound grew louder. The boy shot the ray of the torch so that they could see down the new length of the passage. It led into a larger chamber, and Morgan felt a breath of salt sea air on his face.

He removed his thumb from the switch of the flash. There was a dull glow of a lamp ahead. They pressed forward anxiously, but ready for whatever might happen.

It was lamplight they saw ahead, for it did not flicker as an open fire would. There was considerable draught up the tunnel. The steady grumbling noise was no longer a mystery to Philip Morgan, and he stifled a desire to laugh.

They came to a nook in the wall of the tunnel, and had it not been for the flash of the torch again might have stumbled over a figure lying on some blankets.

It was one of the Germans sound asleep, his mouth open and snoring loudly.

"Vell!" the boatswain muttered, with evident relief.

Then he fell upon the German, one of his calloused palms being clapped upon the fellow's mouth, and with the aid of Phil and Belding triced and gagged the prisoner quickly and in comparative silence.

The gunfire had begun again. They went on to the larger subterranean chamber, which was

dimly illuminated by one lantern. There was nobody else in sight, but there were all kinds of stores standing about. Machinery and spare rifles, too. In addition there were many barrels of gasoline.

It could not be doubted that this island was a storage place for supplies for German submarines. The supplies were brought here, it was probable, before the Allies and the United States had got so many naval ships into the field. Sloe Island was uncharted before the war.

Boatswain Hertig was not voluble in his final commands. They all knew what had to be done. And it must be done swiftly and surely.

They went down a wider tunnel to the main caves, which were a series of caverns with nothing but archways between. There were three separate entrances from the beach. Benson had told them all about this.

Now and then bursts of gunfire started the echoes of the caves to ringing. It was doubtful if any of these efforts of the Germans did the attacking party on the beach any harm.

The party of eleven seamen separated into three platoons, Hertig and the two Seacove boys being together. The boatswain waited two minutes and then fired his revolver. At the signal the three parties sprang forward, yelling at the top of their voices and firing their pistols.



The shouts and the staccato reports of the small arms deafened the Germans and made it seem that a much larger party had attacked in the rear. It was evident that if they had known of the rear entrance to the caves, the sentinel left to watch it had gone to sleep on his post.

The machine gunners were the members of the German party the attackers were most anxious to reach. It was impossible to take all prisoners and the "mopping up" of machine-guns nests is not pleasant work.

The Americans and the British killed and wounded more than a dozen men, and at the point of their rifles drove the remaining half hundred or more out on the beach. There the waiting boat crews sprang into view with leveled rifles. Being between two fires, with in addition Al Torrance and his two companions appearing with leveled guns at the foot of the near-by path up the cliff, the Germans had to give up.

The Hun stronghold was captured and its garrison disarmed.

## CHAPTER XVI

### AN AFTERTHOUGHT

THE Navy Boys from Seacove, with their chief friend, George Belding, were in a state of high delight over the attack upon and the capture of the German garrison of the Sloe Island caves. They were, however, too keenly aware of additional difficulties to waste moments in congratulations.

Every now and then they had heard gunfire from the entrance to this little port—from the breach. The lieutenant and the British tars out there were fighting off the submarine with stubborn persistence.

Until the gun the British had set up on shore was silenced, doubtless the German submarine commander would not dare attempt the passage of the breach. The depth of the water precluded his submerging his craft, and to pass through the passage on the surface would offer the British just the chance they hoped for. Both guns on the submersible threw shell after shell at the gun

from the British boat mounted on the rocks, but none as yet had been effective.

Meanwhile the captured Germans were lined up outside the caves and well policed. These were mostly sailors, with a few marines. There were several officers and a sub-lieutenant was in command. The officers were kept in one group. The privates were not allowed to converse. The sentinels were strict in carrying out these orders, and when one prisoner disobeyed and called some question in German across to his commander a grim-faced British sailor promptly knocked him down.

Leaving the prisoners under a strong and determined guard, Hans Hertig and the British petty officer led the remainder of their men along the beach to join the party at the entrance to the cove. They took the captured German machine guns and plenty of ammunition with them.

A signalman had been sent to the top of the cliff again, and he promptly wigwagged to the party below that there was smoke in sight in two directions. It was now mid-forenoon. The destroyers from which the landing force had come could be expected before long, according to the plans made the day before.

Morgan, Torrance and Belding were with the column of reinforcements which Boatswain Hertig headed. They went at a swinging trot along the shore of the cove.

The submarine commander was not unobservant, it seemed. One of his guns sent a shell screaming over the neck of land to burst very near the advancing column.

"Duck!" yelled the British officer, and every one threw himself face down on the sand.

The shell did no harm. They were up and advancing again in half a minute.

At one spot they passed a sheltered place between the boulders where a dressing station had been established. Seven of the lieutenant's crew were here stretched out on the sand.

On arriving at the end of the point, where the gun was mounted in a crevice in the rocks, they found that others of the party had been hurt.

In fact, as they very quickly learned, two guncrews had been disabled. Exploding shells on hitting the boulders on either side of the gun emplacement had added showers of split rock to the flying shrapnel. Even the lieutenant had a bloody bandage tied about his head. He was now sighting the gun himself.

But he was no gunner. The shell overshot the submarine. What he said showed the desperate state of the man's mind.

The next moment a missile from each German gun burst dangerously near the British gun and two of the crew fell back with rather serious injuries.

Boatswain Hertig saluted and growled a question to the lieutenant. He was young and pale, but his eyes flared with the fighting spirit within him.

"Have you a good gunner in your party, Boat-swain?" he asked.

"Morgan!" ejaculated Hans Hertig, "see what you can do. Get de vorward gun—yes?"

"Good boy, Whistler!" muttered Al Torrance. "Show em' something!"

Phil was not at all sure he could do better than the British officer. The muzzle of the gun could not be slewed around very far because of a boulder. He raised the muzzle a little. The shell was clapped in and the breech closed.

For a moment the American boy sighted. He knew that the forward gun at which he aimed was being handled methodically by the German gun crew.

He stepped back, made a gesture to warn the crew, and pulled the lanyard. The gun plunged backward while the shell went shrieking in a long curve out over the water.

Under the puff of smoke jerked out of the gun muzzle, Morgan, who had dropped to his knees, peered at his objective. He saw the busy Germans about the forward gun of the submarine leap away from their piece—all but the gunner.

He did not pull the lanyard that time, how-

ever. The shell from the gun on the rocks smashed into the emplacement of the Hun's forward piece and exploded. Gun, mounting, and men were scattered like the bits of an exploding firecracker.

The British and American seamen broke into cheers. The hatless and sweating young lieutenant clapped Phil Morgan heartily on the shoulder. For once an Englishman really showed enthusiasm.

"Good boy!" he exclaimed. "You Yankees certainly have good eyes! That was a nice shot."

At this moment somebody shouted to call attention to the submarine. The party were all lying or crouching behind rocks, but many of the boys kept bobbing up and down to sight the enemy.

"She's under way again yet!" growled Boat-swain Hertig.

"Going to make a dash for the cove and try to rescue those prisoners!" yelled an excited petty officer.

The English officer stood up. A last shell from the stern gun on the submersible flew over his head. He did not even dodge.

"Not at all! Not at all, lads!" he cried. "She is going seaward. Yes! they must have discovered the smoke of our destroyers. Can you give them another shell, young man?"

Morgan could, and did. At least, he tried his best to register another hit. But the movement of the submersible took her out of range. He could not swerve the gun muzzle quite far enough.

Now they could see the Germans scrambling into the turret of the submarine. The hatch was closed and she began almost instantly to sink. The seamen jumped up and yelled. It was a victory, but it was unsatisfactory. They hated to see the U-boat escape.

The smoke of the two approaching destroyers could now be seen from the sea-level, and the disappointed landing party observed that the ships were converging, sweeping the sea from both sides of the island. It might be that they had seen and would yet overtake the U-boat.

Meanwhile, the Germans on the island were captured and one U-boat sunk. The combined party of Americans and British seamen and their officers could congratulate themselves over a piece of work well done. The sub-lieutenant in command of the British said as much, and he thanked Boatswain Hertig and his boys warmly.

His advice was that the Americans return to their boat and bring it around the island to meet the *Colodia*. His men would guard the prisoners and remount the shore gun in the nose of his own boat again.



Besides the wounded man sent back to the boat with the third petty officer, the Americans had five wounded, but all slightly. A little first aid was all they would need until they should get aboard the *Colodia* and their own surgeon could attend to their wounds.

"But it's been a mighty exciting time," Al Torrance observed, as they climbed single file up the steep path in the face of the cliff which they had first followed to the mouth of the caves.

"You said it!" ejaculated Ikey Rosenmeyer eagerly. "And how those Limeys fought—and that lieutenant! Oi, oi!"

"By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland!" cried Frenchy Donahue, "he's some fighter. Sure, they are a great bunch, even if they do eat jam with peas."

"Some combination!" chuckled George Belding. "How do you know they do, Frenchy?"

"How else would they make the peas stick on their knives?" returned the joker, with a grin.

"That is calumny," declared George, with laughter.

"At any rate," said Whistler Morgan soberly, "you can bet that lieutenant is no sword-swallower."

"Oi, oi!" cried Ikey. "Ain't it so? He's a regular feller. One of the Britishers told me he thought he was a lord or something."

"Nothing at all stuck up about him," declared Torrance.

"Say, fellows," Morgan asked suddenly, "what did they say his name was?"

"Mr. Macy," said Belding, promptly.

"No. Murdock," observed Donahue.

"Neither of you is right," murmured Morgan. He puckered his lips for a whistle, and then exclaimed suddenly:

"I've got it! Why, Torry! He's Lieutenant Martin!"

"Cracky!"

"That's Minnie's brother's name!" exclaimed Donahue. "Maybe he's a sub-lieutenant, like this man!"

"You can bet he's that, at least," said Ikey.

"I wonder," Morgan murmured, as an afterthought, "if this Lieutenant Martin is named 'Luther.'"

## CHAPTER XVII

### RUMORS

It was difficult and delicate work to get the launch out of the bight at the head of which it had been beached when the Americans had first landed upon the Island of Sloe.

The sea was rising and breakers were rolling into the tiny inlet, to burst and splash all over the boat's crew as they forced the craft out into the open sea. The entrance to the bight was a mass of foaming, creamy water. It jumped and bubbled under the bow of the launch as she pushed through. Had they depended on the oars the crew would have had a considerable task in getting out.

But the motor helped, and she chugged out into the open sea bravely enough. They made their offing, and made fair time around the island, too, against both wind and tide. The sea was running high when they sighted the *Colodia* and the British destroyer, *Cygnets*. The two ships were anchored off the entrance to the basin be-

fore the caves. It was plain that the second German submarine had escaped.

"Never mind," Belding said. "Whistler got one of them. She's sunk in the bottom of that cove, all right."

Two boats were transferring the last of the German prisoners to the *Cygnets* as the Americans chugged under the rail of their own ship. The watch on deck cheered the party as they came over the side. A full report of the proceedings on the island had preceded the returning boat party.

Those of the crew who could get near Phil Morgan slapped him on the back and told him how highly they thought of him for destroying the submarine caught in the cove.

"Some bomb thrower, you, Whistler!" was the cry.

"Oh, stop it!" grumbled Morgan. "Who told you fellows so much?"

"The boys from the *Cygnets*. Those Johnny Bulls can't say too much in your favor. Why, even their lieutenant grew gabby about it to the commander. And you know when an Englishman gets talkative something must have got him going."

Morgan was not soon to hear the last of this praise. The next day all hands were piped in the forenoon watch and Lieutenant Commander Lang addressed them. When he thanked Boat-

swain Hertig and his boat's crew for what they had done in cleaning up the submarine nest, he mentioned Morgan especially and at this the ship's company cheered.

Previous to this, however, the *Colodia* had separated from her British companion and the boys were not likely to see any of those with whom they had been associated on the island until they reached the Firth of Forth, or some other big naval station on the North Sea.

Al Torrance was much disappointed that they had been unable to learn the first name of Lieutenant Martin. In fact, his friends felt almost as much interested in this as Torrance did.

During the voyage they had heard nothing from Seacove, of course, but they hoped at the naval station to which the *Colodia* was bound and where they were to join the Sixth Battle Squadron, as the American contingent of Admiral Beatty's Grand Fleet was called, to find letters from home. Torrance wanted particularly to hear from Minnie Waggoner.

Rumors were flying about the ship regarding some great movement that was to be made at sea within a short time. Some plan by which the German fleet was to be coaxed out in the open had been formed. To fight! That was the desire of every man and boy in the British, French, and American navies.

The waters about Sloe Island would be patrolled by the steam trawlers and submarine chasers rather closely thereafter. The Hun would no longer find it convenient to make that island a stopping point. And if any supply ship came—

"You can't tell," explained George Belding to the other boys. "Some of these Norwegian and Swedish shipowners are hand-in-glove with the Hun. They slip out of far northern ports with just the stuff the submarines need. Their own governments can't control all these Scowhegians."

"Guess we and the Allies can be as smart as all those squareheads," boasted Michael Donahue. "Wish we could catch those supply ships, too."

"Maybe we will," Morgan said soothingly. "Don't be mad about it, Frenchy."

The following day, as already mentioned, Lieutenant Commander Lang addressed the ship's company at quarters.

"Admiral Beatty says the Germans are coming out. They are bound to come out! Otherwise the whole world, and for all time, must understand that the German Navy is cowardly. We will be at the right spot, I hope, when the time comes. And I expect perfect conduct from every man and boy aboard."

Nasty weather was upon them. Before night the wind that had risen in the morning had brought a heavy sea and a shrieking gale, with a rainfall like a tropical tempest. The deck was reeling, as is usual with a destroyer when the sea rises.

"No wonder they have a rule not to take fellows into the navy that have false teeth," Ikey Rosenmeyer observed. "Oi, oi! What chance would they have to hold their plates in their mouths?"

The shifting of watches that night was no pleasant task. What with the rain and dashing waves, the decks of the *Colodia* were quite smothered. When a bulkhead door was opened the water flooded in and down the stairs, to wash into the holds below. Before morning the clank of the automatic pumps added to the stamping of the engines. The ship had to be cleared of bilge.

Al Torrance went to the forward lookout before daybreak. When the day began to come he could distinguish over the rolling waves the two blunt sticks and funnels of what appeared to be a steam freighter. He hailed the bridge:

"Ahoy the bridge, sir! Steam craft in the wind's eye, sir!"

"Trawler, lookout?" asked one of the bridge officers.



"No, sir. Two stacker."

The destroyer's course was changed to head her closer to the point Torrance had indicated. Her speed was increased. The steamer was probably all right, but in wartime a naval patrol takes no chances.

In ten minutes the *Colodia* had worked up to nearly thirty knots an hour. That speed in such a sea and with the wind almost dead ahead meant shaking her up until it seemed every bolt in her frame must fetch loose.

The *Colodia* was too far away from the strange vessel to hail her, even with a gun. But doubtless the stranger saw the destroyer coming up at such speed and could not fail to know her business. Torrance sang out again:

"Broke out an ensign, sir!"

"Mark it!"

"Can't just make it out, sir. Not yet. Soon."

Torrance had a good pair of glasses, and he, like the other boys of his class, knew flags and pennants well. By and by:

"Got it, sir! Scandinavian."

"Of course," the bridge officer said to his mate. "It should be that in these waters. But is she?"

The destroyer already had her signal pennants at peak. She made no attempt to hide her identity. But she did not reduce speed. Nor did she call on the supposed freighter to halt.

Al Torrance and his mate in the forward top watched the stranger keenly; but they did not neglect to scan the distant sea all about the *Colodia*, as well.

The boisterous sea was merely a gray smear at a distance. The light was so uncertain at this hour that it was very difficult, even with good glasses, to spot any small object on the surface.

Yet within half an hour Torrance began to feel an excitement rise within him that was not born of the blundering old freighter that flew the sea flag of the Scandinavian States.

She was still so distant that he could not observe her details or any figures on her deck. But being so high above the destroyer's own deck he could now and then, as the freighter sank in the trough of the sea and the destroyer rose on a wave, see something beyond the bulk of the strange vessel—something that bobbed up and down in the water so low that it must be awash if it was a craft of any kind.

"Put your glass on that, Tumy," said Torrance, to his fellow lookout. "D'you see what I see—or don't I see it?"

"What are you seeing?" demanded Tumy, shifting his own glasses to the other bow of the plunging destroyer. "Say! those are funny looking upperworks for a freighter, aren't they? And she doesn't mount a gun, not that I can see."

"Unless they are behind those ports of hers," replied Torrance. "She's got gunports—eight on a side."

"Pooh! what's so suspicious about those black dots?"

"Needn't mind! Just look over her. Now! While she's low! D'you see that thing beyond her?"

"Cask in the water?"

"And keeps up with her? She is making her twelve knots or so."

Suddenly the bridge officer hailed again:

"What's wrong there in the forward top? What do you see, Torrance? Tummy?"

The former youth switched around to look down at the officer. He cried:

"She has an escort, sir. She's keeping her hull between us and another craft. I think it's a crippled U-boat—looks like her turret to me."

"Me, too!" exclaimed the excited Tummy.

The officer grabbed his own glass and began to mount the shrouds as rapidly as possible.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### A WETTING AND A LETTER

RUMOR and gossip circulate quickly about a naval ship. Although it lacked some time before the changing of the watch, half the crew were on deck, stormy as it was, within ten minutes.

The bridge officer had agreed with the look-outs that a submersible—probably a German U-boat—was plowing along on the other side of the supposed freighter.

The officer spoke freely to Torrance and his mate in the forward top:

“Must be something the matter with the tin shark, if she’s an enemy; otherwise she would never travel on the surface in this sea. But there may be nothing the matter with her torpedo tubes.

“When we get close enough she could easily drop behind the tail of that freighter—if she is a tramp of that quality—and send us a couple of billets-doux that wouldn’t do the old *Colodia* a bit of good.

"Yes, boys, that is no barrel! It is a submarine turret. And at that, she may have captured that ship and put enough men aboard to control her movements. Now, that is a funny looking forward stack."

"That's what I say, sir," said the excited Tummy. "Her upperworks don't look right—not all of 'em."

"May be camouflage, do you think? Upperworks built of canvas fore and aft? If she should be a fast raider, trying to get around Scarpa and into the Kiel Canal—

"Jacks, it's a messy sea! Can't see much. I'm going down to call the Commander. Keep your eyes open, lads."

"Aye, aye, sir," responded Torrance and his companion.

Relief came before the destroyer had narrowed the distance between her and the queer convoy ahead to any great degree. It seemed that every time the *Colodia* swung to starboard or port—if ever so slightly—the course of the supposed freighter was equally changed so as to shelter whatever sailed upon her far side.

Torrance came down from the top but did not go below. With the other members of his watch he lined up at the galley for a mug of coffee and the bread or sandwich that went to all who had been on duty since eight bells.

He swallowed the coffee just as fast as he could, and the hot liquid sent a warming glow all through his physical being. Biting into the sandwich, he went to the port rail, desiring to get a clearer view of the craft ahead which he had decided in his own mind could be nothing but a German raider in disguise, in company with one of those wasps of the sea, a U-boat.

The destroyer was rolling tremendously. Naturally by this time Torrance had become pretty well used to the *Colodia's* motion; yet the forecastle gallery was a place where accidents had been known to happen. Almost without thinking Torry twisted a loop with a bowline about his waist.

Everything was lashed fast along this rail, and he stepped upon a bundle of stretchers to get a better view over the rail. He seized a stay with his left hand and put the sandwich to his mouth for another bite when the whole sea seemed to rise up and wash inboard over the rail.

Such a sea Torrance had never seen shipped before. He floated right up with it, and the suction of the wave snatched him from his hold on the stay.

The *Colodia* rolled back to level keel, and Torrance found himself sailing about ten feet from the ship's rail—and on the outside.

It was a desperate situation. The bowline

held—indeed, it seemed all but cutting him in two at the first jerk—but Torrance was in double danger of being drowned and smashed to a pulp against the steel side of the destroyer.

When the *Colodia* rolled far to the starboard, almost upon her beam-ends, Torrance was jerked out of the sea and flung with terrible force against the hull. He was half stunned by the blow, and he could not scramble up the smooth plates to the rail of the ship.

Back the destroyer rolled, and he was plunged into the sea again. He tried to beat his way to the surface and scream for help. Although that was a most uncertain way of helping himself. Between the whistling of the gale and the hiss and roar of the sea, his puny cries were not likely to be heard on deck.

Besides, as the ship rolled to port again, dipping her rail deeply in the wash, Torrance was driven down, down, down into the green depths until it seemed he could never rise to the surface again in season to get a breath of reviving air.

Kicking, and plunging with his arms, he only managed to strike against the steel plates of the hull once more. And when that rolled again to starboard, Torrance slipped off the plates and hung helpless at the end of the line.

He was jerked out of the sea, however, as the ship rolled over. Expelling the water from his



lungs with difficulty, and gaining a choking breath, he was able to utter a half smothered cry.

It might never have been heard but for a providential happening. Disturbed in their hammocks by the report of a possible enemy ship in sight, Phil Morgan and George Belding had come up from the berth deck and started through the gangway for their own morning draught of coffee. The taut line running over the rail caught Morgan's attention.

"Hello!" he said to George, "who's been fishing?"

"And he's got a bite, Whistler!" exclaimed Belding, seizing the bowline instantly.

Morgan laid hold with him. "There's a big fish on this hook, all right," exclaimed the Seacove youth.

The two hauled in the bowline, hand over hand. The ship began to roll back to starboard. Morgan leaped to the rail and looked over.

And there coming inboard, his eyes glaring, his mouth wide open as though he were shouting, a great welt of a bruise on his forehead and a bleeding cut on his cheek, came Al Torrance!

"Steady-all! Belay!" yelled Morgan to George, and flung himself half over the rail to seize the shoulders of the more than half-drowned youth.

Had the *Colodia* not been rolling to leeward

Phil would surely have gone overboard, too, when he made this reckless dive for his chum. However, both came inboard, and Belding's shout brought help to hold them before the ship rolled again and shipped what appeared to him to be half the ocean on this side.

"Are you hurt, Whistler?" cried Belding.

"Not to speak of. But Torry's sure in a mess."

That was a fact. Torrance was unconscious. They hurried him to the sick bay. The doctor worked over him for some time before he came to consciousness again.

He did not have a broken bone, but he was strained and bruised all over. The other boys did not find out how badly Torrance was hurt until some hours later, for at this juncture the whole ship's company was excited regarding the strange steamship and what she was hiding from the destroyer with her own hull.

It became apparent very soon that the supposed Scandinavian steamer was not what she professed to be. She refused to stop her engines when ordered to do so by signal from the destroyer. The first shell sent across her bow revealed the true temper of the stranger.

The eight black spots along her side opened, guns were run through, and she sent a broadside of shells shrieking over the sea at the destroyer.

It was an attempt, under a neutral flag, to put the naval vessel *hors de combat* in one blast.

The crew of the *Colodia* yelled their rage. They scarcely waited the command "Stations!" to spring to their proper places. The deck guns were slewed to the proper angle, and the gun crews waited the word from the tops to get their range.

The first shots were made in an attempt to drop shells just over the supposed freighter. The sea about the submarine hidden under the stranger's rail fairly boiled. From the tops of the destroyer they could see the geysers thrown up by the exploding shells.

At once the turret of the U-boat appeared in the wake of the steamship, while the latter veered off and increased her speed. It was plain she was no slow-going freighter. She fairly leaped away through the heavy seas.

She had abandoned the U-boat to its fate. Or so it seemed. Almost at once a white flag was raised upon a staff on the submarine. They could see several moving figures on her deck, that was just awash.

Lieutenant Commander Lang and his advisers discussed the situation upon the bridge. The *Colodia* was being driven at top speed, and was overhauling the U-boat rapidly. But the question was: Should the U-boat be attended to first,

or the flying steamship, which, they were all quite sure, was a German raider with camouflaged upper works?

One of the men on the U-boat began to signal with flags. In international code he put over this statement:

"Help. No control. Sinking."

"Now, do we want to believe that or don't we?" demanded one of the subordinate officers of the *Colodia*. "She may have part of the crew at her torpedo tubes right now."

"But if there was not something the matter with her mechanism wouldn't she submerge? See how they pitch?" objected a more tender-hearted officer.

"Tell the helmsman to keep off," commanded the navigation officer. "We don't give them a chance to send a torpedo, broadside on, at any rate."

Lieutenant Commander Lang finally shut his glasses with a snap.

"Mr. Steffens," he said to his first lieutenant, "if those men on that submarine are in peril I am sorry. But they must wait their turn. We chase that flying ship. Tell the forward gun crew to begin firing again as soon as they get the distance and elevation. A chance shot may cripple her."

The *Colodia* swept by the U-boat, leaving her

far on the port side. A stern chase is not always a long chase. In an hour Phil Morgan's own gun in the forward turret put a shell right under the stern of the ship flying the neutral flag, and smashed her rudder and propeller with the one lucky shot.

That was pretty nearly the end of the chase. Keeping on a course that brought her astern of the crippled ship, and head on, the *Colodia* held the enemy under her forward turret guns, while the other could not use her broadside pieces. The Scandinavian flag came down while a white flag went up.

Aboard the captured craft, which was the raider *Prinz Edel*, were found the officers and the bulk of the crew of the U-boat 264. Six unfortunate members of the submersible's crew had been left aboard that craft which, at any moment, might be overwhelmed by the waves. Her submersion mechanism was crippled.

It appeared, however, that it was very fortunate the American destroyer did not seek to save the men on the submarine. Just as the prize crew boarded the raider an explosion was heard in the distance and from the vicinity where the U-boat had last been seen and a column of black smoke announced the end of the German shark.

It seemed that the commander of the sub-

marine, on leaving the six members of his crew aboard her, had likewise left a time-bomb in her vitals, hoping that the American destroyer would be just about alongside of her when the bomb went off.

As for the unfortunate six—Well, they “died for the Fatherland,” whether they wanted to or not.

The *Colodia* finally reached the Firth of Forth and dropped anchor near the great bridge with the *Prinz Edel* as a prize of war. The whole crew was vastly proud and excited about the capture.

All but Al Torrance. He was taken ashore to the hospital, and the doctors said he must rest for two weeks before he could go back to duty on the destroyer. Those two weeks promised to be very exciting ones, too, for all the ships; so naturally Torry was not happy.

There was mail awaiting them, and in his mail was one letter that created particular excitement among the Navy Boy chums, although it had nothing to do with the possible quick ending of the war and the surrender of the German fleet.

Torrance’s letter was from Minnie Waggoner and certain paragraphs in it were read over and over again by the boys who had helped the girl and her father to get away from the circus:

“And so I have to write you bad news about father. He can’t be right in his head, Mr. Torry—he can’t! Mrs. Morgan treated us nicely, but the very second night after you boys went away to join your ship father crawled out of the bedroom window to the kitchen roof, and went away. Your father tried to trace him, and all he could learn was that he went to Boston (he had money enough for that) and we think he shipped on a horse transport, or some other ship, bound for Europe.

“Dear me! Dear me! I feel like crying all the time. Both my father and brother have left me and I don’t know whether either of them is still alive.”

There was more of it; but the above will indicate how poor Minnie Waggoner felt, as well as suggest the anxiety which Torrance and his mates experienced. They were quite sure Mr. Waggoner did not know what he was about. There was reason for the girl to fear that his situation was desperate.



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FLYING HUN

THE two weeks in which Al Torrance had to remain in the hospital ashore were by no means idle weeks for his chums aboard the *Colodia*. They had forty-three hours liberty and besides cheering Torry up, they managed to see a good bit of Edinburgh and learn something about the canny but kindly character of the Scot.

In addition, the friends met some of the British sailors with whom they had fought on Sloe Island—a part of the crew of the *Cygnets*. When the two parties spied each other they came together with shouts and cheers that made the staid old Edinburgh street where they met reëcho, and quite startled the inhabitants thereof.

“’Ere’s the Yanks from the *Colodia*—the fightin’est little fellers there is!” declared one burly cockney, and he fairly grabbed Ikey Rosenmeyer up in his brawny arms and hugged him.

“Say, lay off this!” squealed the son of the delicatessen storekeeper. “You will be wanting to kiss me next! Master-at-arms! Help!”

Nevertheless the two parties were honestly glad to see each other. They went to supper together at a little shop where they served tea and some cakes of a kind that the American boys had never eaten before.

The party was a gay one; but Phil Morgan, bearing his chum, the absent Torrance in mind, as well as because of his own private curiosity, began pumping for information regarding Lieutenant Martin, who had led the British seamen on the raid on Sloe Island.

"See, now," said one of the *Cygnets*' sailors, "he's a reg'lar toff, he is. And he's no end a good officer. We think a heap of him, don't we, boys?"

"What's his first name?" Phil Morgan asked.

"What does it matter? He's just as good a fellow without any first name at all. He can fight all right—my eye!"

"Don't you know even his initials?" asked the American lad. "We happened to hear something about an English navy officer on the other side, whose name is Martin. Fact is, maybe we know his sister."

"Fat lot!" scoffed the British sailor. "I tell you Lieutenant Martin is strictly A-grade. And his folks, too. You'd never meet any of 'em, Yank."

"Don't be so sure that we don't go into

bloomin' high society when we are home," put in Belding, grinning. "Don't forget that there is no law in the States against a hod-carrier getting to be President."

"Oh, yes!" responded the Englishman. "But they don't get there just the syme!"

However, this young fellow promised to find out for his American friends the first name of Lieutenant Martin and as much about his family as he could. At that, he thought that the officer's first name did begin with the letter L.

"It would be nice for Minnie if we could find her half brother," George said seriously to Morgan. "Especially if her father has disappeared. But there is one thing we must take into consideration."

"What is that?"

"Perhaps this Luther Martin whom she tells about will not care to renew any connection with his half sister and his step-father. We must remember that, as Minnie said herself, Luther's father's people were of the upper classes.

"After so many years he may consider his other relatives too common," put in Frenchy.

"I hope he isn't that kind of person," Morgan rejoined, sharply. "And if this Lieutenant Martin of the *Cygnets* should turn out to be Minnie's half brother, I feel that he isn't such a chap as you boys suggest."

The boys came back from their leave to the destroyer in good season, and found much bustle aboard. A squadron of destroyers was ordered to sea that evening on special patrol duty.

"The Huns are suing for peace," was the rumor aboard ship.

"But that doesn't mean anything," Belding said. "They are getting beat on the western front. Our boys are doing wonders. But Germany isn't hurt much yet. And her High Seas Fleet—"

"Oi, oi! If they only would come out and fight!" groaned Ikey Rosenmeyer. "Then maybe I *could* capture one of them Germans to take back to work in my papa's store. Fine!"

"According to what one of the fellows tells me," said Phil Morgan soberly, "we may really get a whack at the German fleet—or a part of it. That is what we are going on patrol for to-night. They say the German seaplanes are as thick as gulls over a part of the North Sea."

"That should presage something," Belding said.

"But what?" demanded Donahue. "By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland—"

"Too bad he didn't play the snakes out of Germany," interrupted Phil. "And those Huns are snakes, all right all right! In the end they

will play some dirty trick on us. See if they don't."

"The dirtiest trick they could play," Belding said thoughtfully, "is to refuse to fight their ships."

"Well," Donahue drawled, "they had to fight when that Captain Carpenter and those other Britishers went into Zeebrugge and stoppered up the submarine base like a cork in a bottle."

"But we can't sail our big ships into their headquarters, can we?" complained Ikey.

"But Admiral Beatty says they are coming out," added Phil more cheerfully.

"And we are going out ourselves to-night," rejoined Donahue. "Well, 'The luck of the Irish' be with us, say I."

Indeed, there was a feeling all through the squadron of destroyers that slipped outside that evening that something of moment was afoot. Through a dim and misty night they steamed on a course that brought them before dawn into fields supposedly sown again and again by German mines. However, the British mine-sweepers had since been there.

The squadron spread out, each ship keeping the one ahead and the one following in sight. The lookouts in the tops signaled the instant they descried anything in sea or sky that caught their eyes.

With the dawn, and as it grew lighter all about the horizon, certain specks rising and flying over the sea to the eastward were identified as seaplanes. From that direction they could be nothing but German planes—the eyes of the High Seas Fleet. Were they harbingers of a dash by the German ships for the open sea?

Back, back, from destroyer to destroyer, and thence by wireless and signals all over the North Sea, went word of these rising hydroplanes. It stiffened the backs of every officer in the Allied ships and rejoiced the hearts of their crews.

“One whack at ’em—that’s all we ask!” cried Seven Knott, the Navy Boys’ close friend. “Vot we vill do to them—vell!”

If the Germans had any idea of coming out to give Admiral Beatty and the Allied ships satisfaction at that time, the crew of the *Colodia* did not know it, of course. But an hour after day-break the radiotelegraph brought an order for the American destroyer to leave the line and hurry into the west to convoy a freighter trying to make Berwick with crippled engines. The *Cygnets* was likewise sent on the same mission.

The two destroyers converged on the freighter within two hours. The ship was the *Quarrant*, English built, but flying the American flag and had made a slow passage from Boston. With so many of the Allied naval vessels plying

the North Sea in this vicinity it did seem as though even a crippled ship could have made her way to port all right without two destroyers to convoy her. Yet there must be some good reason for the order going forth to the destroyers.

And that reason became manifest before long. Several of the flying specks that they had sighted at dawn coming up from the direction of the Kiel Canal appeared suddenly out of a cloud almost overhead. One of the seaplanes spiraled down and finally, keeping clear of the anti-aircraft deck-guns of the destroyers, hovered over the freight steamer.

The seaplane dropped a bomb—and the German's aim was good. The bomb exploded right on the deck of the freighter, tearing her forward stack to shreds and ripping up several deck plates. The destroyers were a mile away on either side of the attacked craft. Their anti-aircraft guns were useless at that distance and it looked as though the flying Hun would be able to wreck the *Quarrant* completely before the naval vessels could get within range.



## CHAPTER XX

### GREAT, IF TRUE

SOMEWHERE about this part of the North Sea there should have been a squadron of British hydroplanes on watch for just such daylight raids as this by these flying Huns. There were, too, already several naval ships in the service from which the planes could rise to meet the enemy in the air.

But on this particular occasion there were no flyers present to meet the Germans in the air. If the crippled *Quarrant* was to be saved from complete disaster the American destroyer *Colodia* and the British destroyer *Cygnnet* had to do it.

Their engines had been turning easily so as to keep near the slow-going freighter. The appearance of the flying Huns from the cloud had been quite as unexpected to the crews of the destroyers as it was to the company aboard the *Quarrant*. But instantly the two naval ships dashed from either side for the threatened freighter. Their stacks belched smoke under the forced draught of the furnaces.

Aboard the American ship every man and boy was under great excitement. To "get" a submarine was a great sporting exploit; but to bring down one of these swooping, hawklike machines with the black cross painted on its under side would be something novel.

"Some chance, this!" exclaimed Phil Morgan.

"Oh, boy!" cried Michael Donahue. "What would Torry give to be here, Whistler? If we get one of those flying Huns—"

"We've just got to get him," declared George Belding. "There! He drops another bomb! See! A few more of those and he'll sink that old hulk."

But the second bomb dropped astern. Though the first explosion had done considerable damage to the *Quarrant*, it was what the flying Huns might do that made the situation such an anxious one for all.

Rifles were distributed to the best marksmen. Phil, George, Ikey and Mike were among those who crowded into the tops with rifles in the hope of getting a shot at the German airmen.

"If one of those whirring machines swoops low enough and near enough—O-o-oh!" muttered Frenchy.

"Oi, oi!" murmured Ikey Rosenmeyer. "I can see that pilot's head—sure I can. If we get a little nearer I'll nick him."

"He's altogether too far up, kid," said one of the older seamen in the top with the boy.

But Ikey's record in rifle marksmanship was high. Even Phil Morgan was little more of a sharpshooter than Ikey.

As the destroyer dashed through the choppy sea, cutting the waves like a knife blade, Ikey never lost sight of the helmeted head and humped shoulders of the German driving the plane from which had already been dropped two bombs upon the freight ship.

The big guns of the *Colodia* were, of course, of no avail at this crisis. But there were two pieces on the forward deck that could throw shells almost straight up into the air.

The anti-aircraft guns of the *Cygnets* spoke first. One shell went clear over the plane, the second burst just below it.

The German pilot steered a course which passed directly above the wallowing *Quarrant*. His mate dropped a third bomb which fell harmlessly into the sea, and then the German plane wheeled and commenced its drive back toward the freighter.

It was just at this moment, and before the gunners on the *Colodia* could get their guns into action, that Ikey Rosenmeyer saw his chance. He had been squinting along the barrel of his rifle for several moments. It was in a rest and Ikey's hand was as steady as his eye.

The helmet and the shoulders came properly in sight. It was a long shot; but the boy pulled the trigger with a feeling of certainty that he was going to make his mark.

And he did! Half a dozen rifles cracked after Ikey's piece spoke; but almost on the instant that Ikey fired the pilot of the German plane drooped forward in his seat and the plane itself began to spin. The other rifle shots—some of them—hit the plane. But it was Ikey Rosenmeyer's bullet that hit the human mark.

Down the plane came like a wounded bird, descending toward the sea with a rapidity that was appalling. They saw the second man in the machine try to get at the controls, but he was not quick enough. The plane crumpled, literally torn apart by the swiftness of the downward dive. With a crash that they heard aboard the destroyer the plane fell into the sea.

One of the power launches was immediately piped away, and it was lowered and shot off toward the mass of tangled wreckage that had been the German seaplane. If the thing had hit the ground it could not have been more of a wreck.

"Whee, Ikey, you certainly did it!" yelled Donahue. "It's a broth of a boy ye are!"

His special chum was not the only person who congratulated Ikey. He descended to the deck in quite a haze of glory.

Meanwhile the anti-aircraft guns on both destroyers were popping away at the other planes, and they were driven off. The Hun had not made much by the attack on the freighter. But that first bomb that had torn away the *Quarrant's* smoke stack had shown what another, hitting just right, might have done.

The crew of the *Colodia*, however, were most deeply interested in the wreck of the plane. The pilot was probably dead, but was the second man killed by the fall or drowned? They watched the launch swiftly nearing the tangle of wreckage.

The crew of the launch fished around in the wreckage for a few moments and then hauled out one man only. He was not the pilot. That unfortunate man was never seen again.

The man they saved seemed to be greatly dazed, and even more frightened. In fact, the fall apparently had taken out of him every bit of pluck he had possessed. When the launch got back to the *Colodia* the fellow was sitting in the sternsheets, crying like a child.

Such a disaster as had befallen him was enough to have quenched the courage of almost any person. And, too, perhaps he believed that he would be ill-treated as a captive.

He was taken below at once to be examined by Lieutenant Commander Lang and the other

superior officers; and from what the Seacove boys learned considerable information was got from the fallen aviator.

Ensign MacMasters, who had been on special duty but had rejoined the *Colodia* while she lay in the Firth of Forth, and was a very good friend of Phil Morgan and his close chums, gave Morgan some idea of what the German prisoner had said.

"It looks as though for once Madame Rumor had it right, Whistler," he said to the boy, "and Admiral Beatty is going to get his wish."

"Meaning that the Germans are coming out of their hole?"

"Well, the commander thinks well enough of the fellow's talk to send a radio-message immediately to the admiral," said Mr. MacMasters. "The Heinie got mad and began to blow, as all the Germans do when you get them going. He says the news is abroad all over Germany that the time is ripe for the great naval coup. The High Seas Command, he says, has been merely waiting for the right moment to strike. They are coming out to wipe Admiral Beatty's Grand Fleet off the seas."

"It sounds good," said Morgan doubtfully. "But don't you think it may just be talk—such talk as they have been given before? Things are going so badly for them on the western front

where Hindenburg is falling down that maybe they are trying to stir up enthusiasm by bragging about what the navy will do."

"I don't know, Whistler," said Ensign MacMasters. "It does seem to me as though they had got to a point at last where they have really got to let the navy do something. This aviator says the whole navy is on the *qui vive*. Their officers can scarcely keep them from seizing the ships and coming out to meet us."

"Well, I should think they would feel that way."

"Yes. Look at the fine boats they have, and the trained men, and all. But most of their navy work since the war began has been sneaky work," said Mr. MacMasters with disgust. "I can't believe the German navymen have approved of either their inaction or of the submarine warfare."

"What does a sailorman on a warship want to do most? What is he trained for? What is he on the ship for at all? Why, to fight! That's his business, if there is any fighting to be done."

"We know that before this war the German navy was in mighty fine shape and her men trained to a hair. And aside from a few little brushes and the Jutland fight—which was more of a chase than anything else—they have not had a chance to show what's in 'em."

"I believe, even if the land forces of Hinden-



burg should break down, that the German navy will take the bit in its teeth and come out. And I only hope we will be near enough to get a crack at them when they do it!" added Ensign MacMasters, with vigor.

"Well, I hope you are right, sir," said Phil Morgan. "This news is certainly great if it's true."

"You've said something, my boy. Now, go and tell the boatswain to pipe away our boat. We're going aboard that freighter yonder to see just how much damage has been done to her. Get busy, boy!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded Morgan and hurried away on the errand.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE SMELL OF BATTLE

THE arrangement of the crew of Mr. MacMaster's boat brought Phil Morgan and George Belding as starboard and port stroke respectively. Torrance was usually Phil's mate in the boat; but now George had taken Al's place. Just as they were lowering the boat word was passed that a boat was getting away from the *Cygnets*, the British destroyer, on possibly the same errand as their own.

The commanders of both the American and British destroyer would be expected to make a report of the *Quarrant* affair, and wished to get the details at first hand.

"Come on, lads," said the coxswain of Mr. MacMaster's boat, "let's show those lime-juicers what's what. When it comes to pulling the ash we ought to be able to row circles around them."

"You certainly are sanguine, cox," laughed Mr. MacMasters. "But I have no objection to a race. Go to it, boys."

"They have a leetle the edge of us," said the coxswain, "being nearer. But that's all right. They're off!"

"Stand by the oars!"

"Shove off!"

"Out oars!"

"Give way! Together, boys! Get 'em going! Now! Pull! *Break your backs!*"

Like clockwork the oarsmen obeyed the coxswain's command. Phil and George set the stroke—long, medium-deep, and with a little jump at the end of each stroke that fairly seemed to lift the boat out of the water.

The British crew was just as eager to beat the Americans to the freighter as Phil and his friends were to beat them. On and on they pulled, the two boats converging on the steamship, but one on the port the other on the star-board side.

The crews of the destroyers began to watch the race and to cheer their own boats. Some of the crew of the freighter hung over the stern to enjoy the trial of speed.

"Keep it up, boys! You are doing fine!" yelled the coxswain. "Hey, lads! that's Lieutenant Martin in that *Cygnet* boat. You remember him on Sloe Island. Show him how you can put it all over his crew for speed. Pull, you bullies! Pull!"

They all grew considerably excited. Even Mr. MacMasters urged the rowers to their work.

Phil and George pulled like automatons; they felt that bursting sensation in the chest which precedes getting one's second wind; the perspiration poured into their eyes. It seemed as though they could not put forth another ounce of effort. Their arms felt stiff. Their muscles flexed with strained difficulty. Must they reduce the stroke?

"Pull! Pull, lads! They are beating you!" yelled the coxswain.

"Now!" burst from Belding's lips.

He leaned farther forward for the next stroke. Phil was with him. Now or never! The two pulled a stroke that carried them well back. The men behind them followed on. The boat leaped through the water with accelerated speed. Again! Another of those long, soul-wrenching strokes!

"Hi, yi!" yelled the coxswain. "You've done it, lads. That is what I call rowing, that is!"

They shot in beside the rusty-hulled steamship. The boat from the *Cygnets* was on the other side of the ship.

Mr. MacMasters had stood up in the bow and the moment he was near enough he leaped for the freighter's rail. The bight of a rope hanging over the rail helped him mount to the deck. He stood squarely on it and Phil Morgan was

scrambling over the rail with the stern line of the small boat in his hand when Lieutenant Martin, of the *Cygnets*, appeared at the other rail.

The two officers saluted each other and smiled.

"The palm must go to your lads, sir," said the Englishman in whom the Seacove boys had taken such an interest. "I congratulate you and them, sir."

Then his glance fell on Phil Morgan. His smile broadened.

"Why, you have a friend of mine there, sir," Mr. Martin added briskly. "That young man is a gunner of parts—and a brave lad, too. I am glad to see him again."

"We think a heap of Philip Morgan on the *Colodia*," said Mr. MacMasters.

He mentioned his own name and the British lieutenant handed the American officer his card. The captain of the *Quarrant* approached.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "if they keep on they'll make a complete wreck of my ship before we can get into Berwick. We've been a mighty long time getting across from Boston. All around Robin Hood's barn! I never did see such a voyage!"

"Anybody hurt, Skipper?" asked Mr. MacMasters easily.

"Not to speak of. One of the crew knocked

flat when that bomb took our stack. Bumped his head. He was weak thereabouts, anyway, I reckon, and it didn't do his head any good."

"What is the damage to the ship, Captain?" questioned Mr. Martin.

All this time Phil Morgan was wondering how he could find out the British officer's first name. Was it Luther, or was it not?

One of the British seamen had come aboard the *Quarrant*, too, but Phil did not recognize him as any one whom he had seen before. Phil was tempted to ask Mr. Martin pointblank if he knew the Waggoners, father and daughter.

Phil knew, as did Al Torrance, that Minnie Waggoner would be very unhappy indeed if both her father and brother were lost to her. If the boys could find the brother on this side of the ocean—this Luther Martin—and he proved to be the right kind of man, the girl would be delighted.

He was almost afraid to put forth any farther effort to learn Lieutenant Martin's first name. He seemed so much higher in the social scale than poor little Minnie and her unfortunate father.

For that Lieutenant Martin was bred, if not born, to a state of cultivated society of which Minnie Waggoner knew nothing was plainly evident even to the Seacove boys. George Belding

came nearer to understanding Martin's status than the others.

Suddenly Phil realized that there was something curious happening farther along the deck toward the wreck of the smoke stack. He saw that Lieutenant Martin had gone that way while Mr. MacMasters was still talking to the captain of the freighter.

A man in dungarees and barefooted came aft and suddenly confronted Mr. Martin. The lieutenant stopped, and for a moment Phil thought he was about to speak brusquely to the deckhand, who seemed to be an old man, for the hair sticking out from under his cap was white.

"My man!" exclaimed the British lieutenant. Then he seemed to realize that he was not on a naval vessel, and that these deckhands possibly did not know quarterdeck etiquette. He would have stepped back and allowed the man to pass.

But the fellow pressed closer to him. He peered up strangely into the officer's face. Captain Rhodes, of the *Quarrant*, suddenly observed the situation.

"Hey, you!" he bawled to the sailor, "get out o' that! Don't mind him, lieutenant. That's the fellow who got a crack on the head. And I tell you he is cracked, anyway." Then to the sailor: "Get on with your job—whatever it is! Hear me?"



The man shrank back at the command and turned away from Lieutenant Martin. Phil did not see the face of the strangely acting sailor, but he saw that Mr. Martin looked after the man in a puzzled way.

"Funny acting fellow. Don't mind him," said Captain Rhodes. "Says he's looking for somebody. Don't know who. Goin' up and down the world starin' at people as though he ought to know 'em. Crazy, and ought to be put in the madhouse, all right."

Mr. Martin made no comment. A few minutes later both officers finished their task and the boats put back to their respective destroyers.

The *Colodia* and *Cygnets* convoyed the old freighter into Berwick Roads, and then turned about and drove back toward the patrol station from which they had been sent that morning.

Every boat they signaled had something to say or to ask about the possibility of a fight. The very smell of battle was in the air. And how the Navy Boys did hope that they would be in it when the German fleet came out to match its strength with Admiral Beatty's command!

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE GREAT DAY COMING

ADMIRAL BEATTY, about the first of November, assembled the ship's company aft on his flagship, the *Queen Elizabeth*, and thus addressed them:

"Men, they're coming out at last. I always said they would. No staleness! Do your jobs, each one of you."

The chief active officer of the Grand Fleet, no more than the bulk of his subordinate officers and the crews, could imagine anything different. It was preposterous to think that a navy like Germany's would not fight if given a chance—no matter what the odds!

The great, ultra-trained German Navy, whose officers for years and years had drunk the toast "*Der Tag*"—meaning the day they should be loosed at England's throat—and whose crews had been taught to believe that their ships were better than any other ships, and their men better than any other men, could do nothing less

than come out of hiding for one grand battle, if it were the last act of an expiring autocracy.

"One whack at 'em—that's all!" was the oft repeated slogan on the American ships in the Sixth Battle Fleet. And this was heard often enough on the destroyer *Colodia*.

She was back again in the Firth of Forth, and Al Torrance was once more aboard.

"That hospital is an all right place for those who like it. They treat you well—only they take your pants away so you can't get up when you want to. I never lay in bed so long in my life.

"But you fellows have been having a lot of fun while I've been 'in blighty', as the Johnny Bulls call it. Cracky! You've been sitting on the world!"

"Sure!" returned Frenchy Donahue. "But it's one hard seat when an old tin pot like this gets to pitching in a cross sea."

"Oi, oi!" agreed Ikey. "And pretty near all the seas around here are cross. Just as mad as they can be—and all the time!"

Torrance had to be told all about the capture of the German airman and the particulars of the incident of the freighter *Quarrant*. Phil Morgan mentioned Lieutenant Martin, too.

"And haven't you fellows learned his first name yet?" demanded Torrance.

"Haven't seen anybody to ask. There's a fellow aboard the *Cygnets* who said he would find out for us," Phil told him, "but we haven't seen that fellow since we had liberty. And let me tell you that liberty is hard to get just now."

"Huh!" returned Torry, "I've had enough shore leave—believe me!"

"We ain't all as lucky as you, Torry," grinned Ikey Rosenmeyer.

"Say," George Belding remarked, "Mr. MacMasters met Mr. Martin aboard the *Quarrant*. Do you suppose he knows his first name?"

"Don't believe so," said Phil. "They just spoke for a minute. I was right there. Mr. MacMasters told the Englishman his name and Mr. Martin passed him his card."

"A card!" ejaculated Belding.

"Visiting card. Oh, Mr. Martin is quite a 'toppy' old dear. Wonder he doesn't wear a monocle."

"That's all right," said Belding earnestly. "But his full name—at least, his initials—ought to be on his visiting card."

"Cracky!" exclaimed Torrance. "Now you've got it."

"I never thought of that card," Phil confessed.

"Let's ask Mr. MacMasters the first chance we get," Torrance cried. And to this his chum agreed.

There was no opportunity just then to put this suggestion into practice. The *Colodia* was tolled off to convoy a string of colliers around to Berwick, and it was a nasty night when they got outside with the slow-going, waddling ships. There was no chance of the boys getting a private word with any officer for several watches.

George Belding was taking his regular turn as "striker" at the radio, and he reported to his mates that the air news, although so carefully censored, and mostly in code, hinted at some great event in the immediate future.

"The boys on the western front have got the German pig under the gate and he is squealing for peace at a great rate. So it must mean that there will be a raid by the whole German fleet so as to bolster up the morale of the German army and the people," George said. "We got the report that Admiral Beatty has told the Big Lizzie's crew again to be ready for the great day."

"'Great day'! You said it!" exclaimed Al Torrance eagerly.

"If it only comes!" groaned Donahue, shaking a doubtful head.

"I believe there will really be a battle," Belding urged. "Perhaps the biggest sea-fight since the world began."

It was hope in their hearts, more than cer-

tainty, that kept them all talking in this way. The *Colodia's* crew had done its share of the "dirty work" up and down the North Atlantic, and in neighboring seas—the little, puttering jobs that fell to destroyers and cruisers alike.

Only once had the Navy Boys from Seacove got into a real fight. They had been temporary members of the crew of the superdreadnaught *Kennebunk* when she had taken part in a small engagement with a part of the German fleet.

The Seacove boys hoped to get into the long promised general engagement of the German High Seas Fleet and Admiral Beatty's Grand Fleet when the time for such engagement should arrive. Any hour might bring the signal for the gathering of all the Allied fighting ships to meet the enemy.

"This beaung coal barges and the like up and down the North Sea is a bum job," announced Al Torrance. "It isn't what we came clear across the periscope pond for."

They got the convoy to Berwick without incident and a boat was ordered ashore on some errand. It chanced to be Ensign MacMaster's boat, and Torrance, being pronounced fit for duty, took his old place on the stroke-oar's bench beside Phil Morgan.

Al whispered to his chum as they rowed shoreward to speak to the ensign about the card

the British officer had given him aboard the *Quarrant*, but Phil saw no opportunity to do this before they docked.

Mr. MacMasters went ashore alone; but while the boat awaited his return a figure that Phil well remembered came loafing down the wharf and stood just above them.

"Hello, *Colodias*," said the blue-coated man in a gruff voice. "How's tricks?"

"How-de-do, Captain Rhodes," responded Phil to the merchant skipper. "Is the *Quarrant* repaired?"

"We'll get out of here in three days, I expect," said Captain Rhodes. "You are the young chap that was aboard of me with your ensign, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. MacMasters has gone into the town. Did you wish to see him?" asked Phil politely.

"No. It's that other officer I'd like to clap my eyes on. You know. The British sub-lieutenant. Funny fellow, him."

"'Funny'?" repeated Phil curiously.

"That's it, son. 'Funny.' Know what he did? Took a shine to one of my crew, and when we got here to Berwick, that English lieutenant had the man sent ashore and he's in the naval hospital and I can't get him out. And me as short-handed as I am. The nerve of that Johnny Bull!



Just because the fellow got a little crack on the head—”

“Oh, I say!” interrupted Phil Morgan, suddenly immensely interested. “You are talking about your man who was hurt when the German dropped the bomb on your ship, aren’t you, Captain Rhodes?”

“Yes. Whitey. That’s the man.”

“Then Whitey is his name?” asked Phil, with disappointment.

“All the name I ever heard he had,” said the skipper. “But that ain’t any cause for Lieutenant Martin to put him up in that hospital. I can’t get Whitey out of clink, and I don’t know where the *Cygnets* is.”

Captain Rhodes strolled away. Phil and Al talked the matter over earnestly. It seemed that Lieutenant Martin must, indeed, be a “funny” fellow to take an interest in a common seaman on an American freighter. And what was the matter with the seaman that he had to go to a hospital?

Captain Rhodes was out of hearing when Phil and Al thought to ask him that question.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### ON A STRING

WHEN Mr. MacMasters came back to the boat the two Seacove boys were so eager and excited that he could not fail to notice it. The matter of Lieutenant Martin and the unknown sailor from the *Quarrant* was strange enough to spur anybody's curiosity. The boys begged Mr. MacMasters to listen to them.

He sat down with them on the dock, to which Phil and Al climbed by his permission, and before starting back for the *Colodia* the officer allowed the two chums to tell him all about it.

"Why, boys," he said at length, "I remember that officer from the *Cygnet* very well. Was his name Martin? I had forgotten. He spoke well of you, Whistler. Why didn't you ask him then what you want to know about his name?"

"That's what I say!" grumbled Torrance. "You bet I wouldn't have let him get away so easy."

"He's not the sort of person one could bluntly

put such a question to," declared Phil. "Not so easily."

"One of these high-and-mighty fellows, was he?" asked Mr. MacMasters, smiling.

"Not exactly. But you couldn't ask him such a personal question—at least I couldn't—any more than I could ask Commander Lang."

"Humph! I get you," said Mr. MacMasters thoughtfully. "He's that kind—yes. But it may be bashfulness rather than snobbishness. Some of the best of these Johnny Bulls are that way."

"But the card he gave you, Mr. MacMasters?" asked Al Torrance eagerly.

"Did I have his card?" responded the ensign doubtfully. "Maybe. I forget. I don't know what I did with it if I had it," and he began to search his pockets.

"I don't think you had on the same uniform that day, sir," said Phil quietly.

"You are right," agreed their friend. "Well, I'll look for the card the first time I get a chance. Perhaps that will give you the man's first name. But why he should have shown so much interest in that poor chap on the *Quarrant* I could not guess."

Torrance was much disappointed—no doubt of that. Mr. MacMasters' promise, he said, was "cold comfort."

When they got aboard the destroyer Phil Morgan asked his chum:

"Did you answer that letter Minnie Waggoner wrote you?"

"To be sure I did. And I told her maybe we had a line on her brother's whereabouts, too."

"But you don't know that we have," objected Phil.

"Just the same, maybe it will cheer her up—especially after her father disappeared as she says he has."

"But if Lieutenant Martin isn't the one—"

"It can't make it any worse for Minnie," declared Al. "And we've just got to make sure about the lieutenant."

"I'd like to know who that sailor is that Mr. Martin had taken to the hospital," Phil said thoughtfully, "and what the matter with him is."

They found other matters—and those exciting—to take up their attention aboard the *Colodia*. Orders had come for the destroyer to join the Sixth Battle Fleet, which was composed of five American battleships and the smaller craft which had joined Admiral Beatty's Grand Fleet and was under the immediate command of the American Admiral Rodman.

It was said now that Germany was on the verge of giving in. Her wonderful Military Command that had scarcely won a battle in all

the four years of war save when the Germans outnumbered their immediate enemy five to one was now in a state of panic. They were suing for an armistice. But the Allied navies still hoped and prayed that the German High Seas Fleet would come to sea for a last dashing maneuver against Germany's foes.

"Think of poor old Spain in our war with her," said George Belding eagerly, as the chums talked it over. "Bottled up in Santiago, and without a new craft in her fleet. Some of those old Spanish ships were almost as ancient as the Ark—and just about as useful against our guns. Yet the Spaniards came out to face our ships rather than surrender like sheep. These Heinies must give us a fight!"

"If they don't the whole world will laugh at them," said Phil Morgan soberly. "They will never hold an iota of prestige again if they don't fight."

"I guess they'll come out," said Torrance. "That is why we have orders to join the five big fellows to-morrow."

The five big fellows were the American dread-naughts *New York*, *Texas*, *Arkansas*, *Wyoming* and *Florida*.

It was a fact that the High Powers had learned that an order for the German fleet to proceed to sea had been issued. It was under-

stood that four of her thirteen huge battleships had already started. Admiral Beatty's Grand Fleet sailed easterly to meet them, spreading out in a huge fan-shaped figure as they crossed the North Sea.

But at no point did the smoke of the leading German ships appear. Anxious hours passed in which the radiotelegraph brought little that was satisfactory to the Allied ships.

Then, suddenly, the blow fell. The report had it that the German crews had mutinied and driven their officers overboard. At any rate, the men had refused to take the ships to sea. The details of the Kiel mutiny were lacking, but the fact became fully acknowledged that the very worst that the sailors and officers of the Allied ships could imagine had happened:

The German Navy would not fight! The armistice was declared. Hope of a fair fight was dispelled. And yet, there permeated the Allied fleets a suspicion that all was not above-board. Germany was suspected of trying to strike a desperate blow upon an unsuspecting foe when she handed her great squadron of fighting ships over to her conquerors.

When one has fought an enemy for four years whose every act has been to spew the venom of treachery on the high seas, the Allies may not be blamed for fearing that, in the end, the German

High Seas Command would again resort to underhand and perfidious trickery.

Perhaps the American seamen and their officers failed to share this feeling in its entirety, and for more than one reason. In the first place, the United States had not been fighting the common enemy so long; again, the bogey of the German "superman" had never really taken a throat-hold upon the American public, as it had upon the British and French, for instance.

To boys who, like the friends from Seacove, thought mainly of Germans as being delicatessen shopkeepers like Ikey Rosenmeyer's father, or rotund little musicians who play the slide trombone—men whom they rather liked but whom they could always laugh at—the stories they heard of the menace of Germany were not altogether impressive.

It might be that the navy of the enemy was going to be surrendered with its guns and torpedo tubes loaded and bombs in the hold to blow up the Allies if they come aboard. A dozen wilder stories circulated through the Allied fleets.

"It is a fact," Phil Morgan agreed, "that we have seen some mighty mean Germans since we signed up on the old *Colodia*, and we have helped put quite a lot of that kind out of business.

"But, goodness, fellows! we've got to distinguish between the good and the bad. And,



anyway, I never did think the average run of Germans would make very savage fighters—not from choice. They must have been bitten by that mad dog they call ‘Kultur.’ If they will kill this ‘Kultur’ so that he will no longer bite their school children after a couple of generations Germans will be pretty decent folks again.”

“Ah, that’s all right,” Torrance growled. “But it will take more than two generations to make the world forget that their navy wouldn’t fight.”

The great disappointment was voiced by Admiral Beatty in a way to make the Allied navies—and the world at large—laugh. He had ever bolstered up his men’s hopes that there would be a big battle. After the terms of the armistice were announced and accepted by Germany, including the surrender of her ships, the Admiral called the *Queen Elizabeth’s* company to attention again.

“Men,” he said, “I always told you they’d come out. But I didn’t think they’d come out on a piece of string!”

## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE BIG SURRENDER

THE Sixth Battle Squadron lay in the Firth of Forth very nearly under the giant bridge that spans that waterway, the five American dreadnaughts easily distinguished from any other battleships in the Allied navy by their lattice masts. Near the five big boats lay, likewise, the destroyer *Colodia*.

The scene in the great waterway on the eve of the surrender of the German ships was a brilliant one. Every ship was fully manned and from the tops and rigging fluttered flags and pennants.

Admiral Beatty had made most of the arrangements with the conquered foe for the surrender by wireless. Admiral von Muerer had come over in the *Koenigsberg* to represent Germany, but his chief task seemed to be to make excuses or to try to beg for different terms from those his country had already agreed to.

Admiral Beatty had as little patience with the German sea-lord as he had for the demands made

by the Kiel Naval Soviet of Workmen and Sailors, which Admiral von Muerer brought for Beatty's signature, and which read:

"I, the undersigned, guarantee that all German crews, either of submarine or surface craft, proceeding to England for internment, will be immune from all ill-treatment."

Admiral Beatty tore that document up and threw it to the deck, with the statement to the interpreter:

"Tell him they are coming to England. That is all there is to it."

On this day, the one previous to that set for the surrender, the plans for the ceremony were fully made. On the vessels belonging to the American squadron was extra bustle. Admiral Rodman was to hold a reception on the flagship *New York* to certain important personages, and the commanders of the other American craft were to attend.

Mr. McMasters' boat was called away for Commander Lang's use. The ensign appeared in his smartest uniform, the seamen were spick and span. As the ensign came along the deck to look over his boat's crew he smiled at Phil Morgan and spoke in a low voice to him.

"Here, Morgan, I found that card the English-

man gave me. Tuck it into your pocket. 'Tention!"

Phil had no chance even to glance at Lieutenant Martin's visiting card at that moment, and did with it what Mr. McMasters had bade him do. The next minute they were in the boat and Lieutenant Commander Lang came down the ladder.

With perfect discipline they got away from the *Colodia* and no boat was rowed more nattily to the *New York* than the one in which Morgan and Torrance pulled stroke. As they neared the flagship of the squadron Commander Lang suddenly started, looking at the pennants fluttering in the dreadnaught's shrouds, and exclaimed:

"Cease rowing! Pardon me, Mr. McMasters. I want the men to see that."

"Yes, sir?" said the ensign questioningly.

"Slew around, Cox! That's it. Look up, men. You see something for the first time since the United States was a nation. The Royal Ensign of Great Britain flying above the Stars and Stripes."

They then pulled in to the dreadnaught's side, and Lieutenant Commander Lang ascended the steps, with Ensign MacMasters attending him. The boat, under charge of the coxswain, drew off.

Aboard the *New York* were the King of Eng-

land, the Prince of Wales, Admiral Beatty, and Admiral Sims, the ranking American admiral in European waters. Then the fog, which had been a daily visitor to the Firth of Forth for several days, shut down again and the boys in the boat saw little of what went on aboard the flagship.

At nightfall the great fleet still lay at anchor, the darkness shot with a myriad of twinkling lights and flashes as the ships signaled to one another. One signal which came from Admiral Beatty's ship, the *Queen Elizabeth*, and last of all, was of moment. It warned the officers and men of the Grand Fleet that the methods by which the enemy had waged war were not to be forgotten for an instant during the coming months of internment, and that no intimacy of any sort would be tolerated between the German seamen and officers and those of the English and American ships.

Operation Order No. 22 was then circulated, which in formal language told the particulars of the arrangements for the next day's ceremony. No risks were to be taken. Every craft participating in the herding of the German ships was to have her guns aimed at particular ships of the enemy, with the gun crews at their stations.

"Don't it look kind of foolish to you?" asked one sailor of Phil Morgan and his chums, as they stood at ease on the forward deck.

"Don't criticise your superiors, boy," snapped George Belding. But Phil said:

"Oh, I don't know, Johnny. I wouldn't say these precautions were foolish—considering. How do you suppose most of the German officers feel? They say the crews have become Bolsheviks and have taken over most of the ships. And, in any case, those Prussian junker officers are out of a job."

"Well? What if, Whistler?" was the query.

"I guess what Admiral Beatty and the others on high fear is some stunt by a submarine manned solely by these sore-headed officers," explained Morgan. "They could easily get a couple of our ships before being sunk themselves. I hear that any battle squadron that is attacked has orders to scatter. The rest of the line will continue as if nothing had happened."

"And let 'em get away with it?" cried Torrance.

"The submarine is to be sunk—provided she attacks. But if a solitary gun turret moves on one of the German surface ships, the whole lot are to be blown out of the water," continued Morgan.

"Cracky!" exclaimed Torrance, "that sounds better."

At four bells of the mid-watch the *Colodia*, among the first ships to leave the Firth of Forth, put to sea. For hour hours the ships followed, the *Queen Elizabeth* bringing up the rear. She did not weigh her anchor until four bells of the morning watch.

From his position in the rear Admiral Beatty herded the long gray lines of fighting ships like sheep. Not one of the vast number changed speed or direction without the Admiral's permission.

The squadron sailed two or three miles apart, and each ship was separated from her neighbor by some five hundred yards. The speed of all was a uniform twelve knots an hour.

In the raw, icy darkness of that dawn the boys on the *Colodia*, as on the other vessels, were turned to as usual, the decks were swept, and all the usual chores done smartly.

At seven bells the boatswain piped "general quarters." The Seacove chums went to their places—Phil Morgan and Al Torrance to the forward gun turret.

Their minds, of course, were fixed on the coming wonderful happening. Indeed, the two friends had thought of little else for forty-eight hours.

But suddenly Torrance startled Phil Morgan with a question:

"Say, Whistler, what was on that card Lieutenant Martin gave our Mr. MacMasters? I saw him pass it to you yesterday."

"Jinks! I never thought of it again, Torry," declared his chum. "Wait! Here it is!"

Out of his pocket he pulled the slip of paste-



board. He turned it face up so that they both could read. Torry uttered an ejaculation of satisfaction:

"Cracky! It's him!"

In the middle of the card was engraved, "*Lieutenant L. Martin, R. N.*"

"Sure, it's Lieutenant Martin's card," agreed Phil Morgan. "But, is he Minnie's brother Luther?"

"What do you mean? Of course he is!"

"'L' does stand for 'Luther,' old boy. But jinks, it stands for lots of other names, Torry—Louis and Leonard and Levi and Lester and—"

"Don't always be a wet-blanket," growled Torrance.

"And don't you be too sanguine. We'll have to ask Lieutenant Martin what his name is—pointblank—after all!"

The guns of the *Colodia*, as well as of every other ship in the Allied fleets, were fully manned, ammunition was in readiness, and the subguncrews were at their stations. In front of each of the larger ships were swung that newest of anti-mine devices known as the "paravanos." The U-boat watch was mounted, and on the American ships the United States battle ensign was hoisted on high. Indeed, the entire fleet was in battle array.

The light cruiser *Cardiff* and a screen of de-

stroyers were far ahead of the main body of the Grand Fleet. The *Cardiff* first signaled the German ships forty miles east of May Island. Some time later, when the distance was reduced to twenty miles, the United States squadron was put in charge of four of the German ships. The surrendered craft were herded in the right direction.

"Wonder how they feel over there," George Belding said thoughtfully. "Do you suppose, Whistler, that all the sailors on those ships have mutinied, or is it more German bluff?"

Later it was learned that most of the German seamen had mutinied because they had been told that the sailors of the Allied ships had already done so and would not fight. This was told the Germans by their officers to encourage the poor fellows to take the ships out and attack the Allies. But for once a German lie, as Torrance observed, had a "back kick."

At noon Admiral Beatty signaled to the surrendered craft:

"The Imperial German ensign will be lowered at sunset to-day and will not be hoisted again without my permission."

They came to anchor once more, and after dark, in the Firth of Forth. The German vessels were herded in Largo Bay. Inspection parties

had already gone on board to see that on each surrendered vessel the orders of Admiral Beatty had been obeyed in every particular.

Then, late at night, came signals from the flagship for a religious service in the darkness "for the victory Almighty God had this day vouchsafed our arms."

After this the Navy Boys went to their hammocks, ending the most memorable day of their lives.

## CHAPTER XXV

### PAST HISTORY AND FUTURE PROPHECY

"THERE are no two ways about it," declared 'Al Torrance with emphasis. "We have just got to see this Lieutenant Martin again and find out all about him, and we're going to do so even if we have to go to Admiral Beatty himself for liberty."

"Oi, oi! You said it, Torry," cried Ikey Rosenmeyer. "And speak a good word to him for me, yet."

"By St. Patrick's piper that played the last snake out of Ireland!" ejaculated Frenchy Donahue with deep feeling, "liberty is as hard to get aboard this old hooker as it is in the Green Isle itself."

"Pshaw!" said George Belding, "why worry? Look at the crowds going ashore. There are so many from the fleet now over there that I guarantee they are stepping on each other's feet in the town."

"Just the same, Torry's right," Phil Morgan

said. "We must interview Lieutenant Martin, of the *Cygnets*. First we know, all this huge flotilla will scatter. The *Cygnets* will be sent to some other station. Or we shall shoot for home. May happen any day."

"Oi, oi! And me not an admiral yet," groaned Ikey, "What will my papa say?"

"Never mind. You can easy get him a Heinie prisoner now," chuckled Donahue. "They are thicker than spats since the big surrender."

"Write the lieutenant a letter," suggested Belding sensibly.

"And maybe he'd never get it or we'll move out before he can answer," rejoined Torrance. "This is too important a matter for a letter."

"I bet Torry's heard from Minnie Waggoner again," put in Donahue.

"It's true. I have," returned the older boy. "And the poor girl is just about heartbroken. No word of her father at all."

"It is a sure thing," Phil Morgan observed, "that we should talk to Mr. Martin personally."

"What are you going to say?" demanded Donahue. "Walk up to him and ask him—right spang off!—what his first name is?"

"Well—"

At that moment a figure rounded the forward turret, approaching the spot where the five friends were loafing—a figure, the sight of which brought

all of them to attention. When Lieutenant Commander Lang walked the forward deck every garby in sight was instantly on his very best behavior.

"Ah, boys," the commander said pleasantly, "are you happy now?"

Phil Morgan saluted with that peculiarly snappy motion so typical of the American sailor.

"Glad it's over, sir. But glad we came, too," he said promptly.

"That's it, is it?" smiled the officer. "No more chasing tin sharks and—You're Morgan, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have had quite a broad experience since you joined, haven't you? And some of your mates there?" he glanced kindly at the other boys. "Are you all right? Anything you particularly wish that I can do for you?"

"I say, sir!" blurted out Al Torrance, saluting. "We're awfully anxious to see a man aboard the *Cygnnet*, destroyer. She's lying off yonder."

"Liberty?" said Commander Lang. "I have been chary about giving permission to visit other ships, too."

"It is Lieutenant Martin we wish to speak to, sir," Phil Morgan put in. "He was in command of the party that cleaned up the Sloe Island nest, sir."

"Indeed? And you boys were all in that scrimmage with Seven Knott, weren't you?"

"Yes, sir," they chorused eagerly.

"Well, it is not so difficult," Lieutenant Commander Lang observed. "Find Seven Knott and send him to me. You boys can take a wherry and row over there. The boatswain will go with you."

The commander acknowledged their combined salute and strolled away. Ikey and Mike Donahue sprang away at once to search the ship for Hans Hertig. Ikey found him between decks and hustled him off to see Mr. Lang.

"This is important, Hans," the boy declared. "We've got permission to visit the *Cygnat*, and you're to go along and see that those limejuicers don't bite us."

"Vell," said Seven Knott placidly.

Ten minutes later the Navy Boys and the boatswain pushed off from the foot of the landlubber's ladder and rowed their prettiest to the British destroyer, which lay about a mile away from the anchorage of their own *Colodia*.

In coming alongside, the Seacove boys were hailed vociferously by a line of seamen along the port rail forward. Some of them recognized the visitors, having known them at the time of the Sloe Island affair. Others, Phil Morgan and his friends had met ashore in the town.



"Boys from the *Colodia*, U. S. A.," called Seven Knott to the petty officer of the *Cygnnet*, "to see Mr. Lieutenant Martin. Pass the word."

"I'll do that little thing for you, Boatswain," replied the master-at-arms.

"Maybe he won't see us " whispered the anxious Torrance.

"Think we're too fresh," suggested Phil Morgan.

"He needn't put on swank—isn't that what they call it?" grumbled Mike. "If little Minnie is his sister—"

"Can the chatter, youngster," commanded Torrance. "Leave it to Whistler to do the talking—or George."

"Talk to him yourself, Torry," urged his chum with some embarrassment. "You know—"

The master-at-arms returned. He beckoned the boys to come aboard.

"Come on, young gents," he said. "The lieutenant will see you."

"Goody!" gasped Ikey, quickly carrying the painter to the platform.

He was followed by the other boys. Seven Knott lounged comfortably in the sternsheets of the wherry and lit his pipe.

Morgan headed the line of boys inboard. The moment he stepped foot on deck he caught sight of the lieutenant.

Mr. Martin was with a group of other officers, standing aft. He came at once to meet the boys from the *Colodia*, and his smile was quite unaffected.

"Well, well!" he said. "This is a pleasure, boys. I remember all of you at Sloe Island. Is there something I can do for you?"

The Yankee boys had lined up at once and their salute was as snappy as it would have been aboard their own ship. There followed a moment of hesitancy, then Phil thrust forward the card the lieutenant had given Mr. MacMasters.

"Mr. Martin," he said, "this is your card. You gave it to our ensign that time aboard the *Quar-rant*. We are—are terribly anxious to—to find a Mr. Luther Martin who is in the English navy, only we do not know his rank. Are you he?"

"Well," smiled the lieutenant, "I confess you astonish me. My name is Luther. But why should you Yankee boys be looking for me?"

"Oh—I—" Phil was speechless for the moment, and Torrance was too excited to wait for his chum to go on.

"Oh, I say, Mr. Martin!" he gasped. "Did you ever have a sister Minnie?"

"'Minnie'?" repeated the lieutenant, and the boys saw his countenance pale and its expression change. "What do you know of Minnie? Minnie who?"

"It is Minnie Waggoner," answered Torrance.

"Boys, what do you know about Minnie Waggoner?" asked the lieutenant, and it was plain that their words had startled and interested the English officer immensely.

"Say!" stammered Torrance, "she's staying at Whistler's house right now. She's staying with Whistler's mother."

"Whistler?"

"Him!"

The lieutenant turned to Morgan. "Is that true? What sort of looking child is she? How did you come to know her? Is she in the States?"

"She is about fifteen, I guess," Morgan told him slowly. "She and her father came to the States some time ago. But we only met them—we fellows—just before we came across this last time in the *Colodia*."

"But how came she to be in your mother's care?"

"Why, Mr. Martin, her father was hurt—"

"You mean that Mr. Waggoner was with her when you boys met Minnie?"

"Yes, sir."

"It—it can't be," murmured the lieutenant. "They must be other Waggoners."

"Say!" exclaimed Torrance, earnestly, "she's sure your sister, Mr. Martin, if you ever lost a sister named Minnie."

"My little sister and my step-father did disappear from Plymouth—"

"Say! that's where Minnie said they lived," broke in Donahue. "And her father worked in a ropewalk."

"She said she had a brother Luther," Torrance went on to explain, "who was taken away from her by his grandparents years ago and who afterward joined the navy as midshipman. Then they lost track of him, and Minnie and her father went to America."

"You interest me deeply, boys. Go on."

"Well, her father was hurt on the voyage going over. Fell from aloft, I believe, and hurt his head. And, say! he hurt his head again the night we fellows first met the Waggoners," added Torrance.

"He's queer all right," said George Belding thoughtfully. "Or he would not have run away from Minnie."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Mr. Martin. "Isn't this man with Minnie now?"

"No, sir," Phil Morgan explained. "Torrance got a letter from Minnie. She said her father wandered away, and they think he shipped on some boat out of Boston."

"Boston, Massachusetts, do you mean?"

"Yes, sir. He didn't know what he was about. He got a knock on the head at the circus—"

"Goodness, boys!" exclaimed Ensign Martin, throwing up his hands in despair. "Let's get this thing straight. One of you tell me all about it—from the very beginning."

To tell the complete story of their meeting with and interest in Minnie Waggoner and her father was a difficult task in the opinion of the Seacove boys. Even Torrance, with all his interest in the girl's affairs, shrank from the attempt. Then Ikey Rosenmeyer had an inspiration.

"Oi, oi!" he croaked. "Let George do it."

And George Belding did it. That the lieutenant was intensely interested in the narrative was plain. He listened without a word to the end of Belding's rather long speech.

"It is she! It must be!" said Mr. Martin at length. "It is wonderful. And yet, I have a more wonderful thing to tell you boys. I should almost be tempted to doubt that your Minnie Waggoner is my little sister if it were not for one other thing."

"Yes, sir?" said Belding politely.

"You say that my step-father has disappeared from that town of Seacove where you boys live?"

"So Minnie writes," Phil Morgan said.

"And so he has. I know it!"

"You—you know it, sir?" exclaimed Torrance. "You know something of Mr. Waggoner's whereabouts, then?"

"My stepfather is in the naval hospital at Berwick. I have only heard this day from the head surgeon that he is well on the road to recovery. They very skillfully performed an operation on his head—lifted a sliver of bone that has been pressing upon his brain for years—"

"Jinks!" ejaculated Phil Morgan, "was that Mr. Waggoner who spoke so oddly to you, Mr. Martin, on the *Quarrant*? I did not see his face, sir."

"You are right. That is Mr. Waggoner. A very kind man he was to me when I was a child. I could scarcely believe it was he, he had so changed. His hair is perfectly white, and he evidently was not in his right mind. But the surgeons say he is all right now.

"I doubt, however, if he would remember what had become of Minnie. Little Minnie! The dear little sister that I loved so well. This is great news you have brought me, boys," and tears stood frankly in the lieutenant's eyes. "It is a great day when I learn that Minnie is alive and I shall have her with me again."

But Torry had his doubts about that. He had a gloomy eye for Lieutenant Martin for the remainder of their stay on the *Cygnets*.

"What's biting you, Torry?" demanded his chum as the rowed back to the *Colodia*.

"Say! that Lieutenant Martin is all right. I

guess he's a nice fellow. But he takes too much for granted."

"How is that?" asked Whistler.

"Why, he seems to think all he's got to do is to write Minnie Waggoner to come back to England and she'll come. I guess he'd better go over there and see her at Seacove. *That's* all right. But I don't see why any girl that has once got to the States should want to come back to England again, even if her brother is a high-mucky-muck in the British navy."

"Well, now, Torry," agreed Whistler. "There is good sense in what you say."

For the Navy Boys of the destroyer *Colodia* were very, very eager to get back to the good old U. S. A. And here we will leave them and say good-bye.

THE END



# Navy Boys Series

By **HALSEY DAVIDSON**

12mo, cloth, illustrated and with colored jacket

The true story of the American Jackies of to-day—clean-cut, brave and always on the alert. The boys join the navy, do a lot of training, and are then assigned to regular service. They aid in sinking a number of submarines, help to capture a notorious German sea raider, and do their share during the taking over of the enemy's navy. A splendid picture of the American navy of to-day.

**NAVY BOYS AFTER A SUBMARINE**  
Or Protecting the Giant Convoy

**NAVY BOYS CHASING A SEA  
RAIDER**  
Or Landing a Million Dollar Prize

**NAVY BOYS BEHIND THE BIG  
GUNS**  
Or Sinking the German U-Boats

**NAVY BOYS TO THE RESCUE**  
Or Answering the Wireless Call for Help

**NAVY BOYS AT THE BIG SURREN-  
DER**  
Or Rounding Up the German Fleet

**GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY**

Publishers

New York







